

20% MORE "THEY WENT THERE" THAN BEFORE!



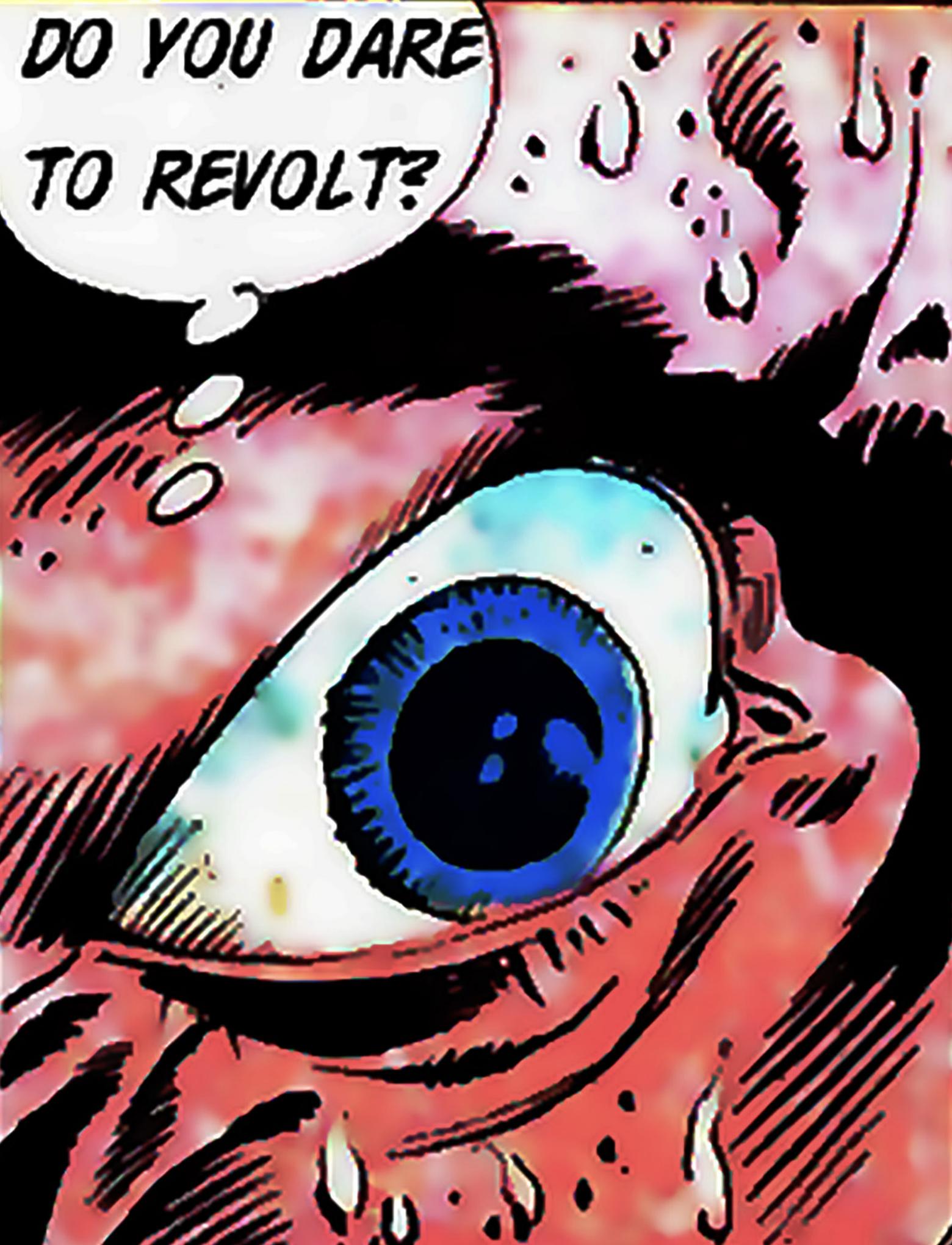
SINGING LARK

issue 02



BANNED IN RUSSIA
MAY CONTAIN TRACES OF "GAY PROPAGANDA"

DO YOU DARE
TO REVOLT?



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BANNED IN RUSSIA

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Putin's "Threats To Neutralize" List

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**OUR GLORIOUS LEADER: HIS FEATHERED MAJESTY,
THE ETERNAL PRESIDENT,
SUPREME DOUBLE GOLD STAR VICE-CHANCELLOR GENERAL
LARKUS, COMMANDER OF THE THIRTEEN LEGIONS,
ARCH-IMPERATOR, PRIME DIRECTOR, CHIEF CONSUL, AND THE
RIGHTFULL HEIR TO THE THRONE OF GREENLAND.**

Letter to the Editors

FROM: *TOTALLY 100% NOT THE FSB*

As a passionately loyal admirer of the most glorious and angelic leader that is our dearest Vladimir Putin, I must vehemently oppose your recent issue. Why must you criticize the triumphant and enlightened leadership of his greatness, Vladimir Putin? Have you not seen how his firm, sculpted muscles flex and tighten in the wind as he majestically guides his stallion with little more than the pure ecstasy that is his glorious presence? I suggest you look it up, the photography of his god-like stature in natural environments will surely be cherished for generations to come.

Every single day Putin shows his bravery to the world by doing things like discovering ancient artifacts, personally guiding migrating birds, and tranquilizing siberian tigers. (The darts were simply protocol, he of course can paralyze any living thing with nothing more than a dominating and beautiful gaze from his mesmerizing eyes). Who else can break up the Ukraine, whip Pussy Riot into submission and conquer the Olympics all in one year? (Putin of course could have personally won each and every olympic event, but did not participate to give the much inferior nations of the world a fighting chance, even a man as infallible as him is capable of mercy).

I must insist that you immediately cease all criticism of his most omnipotent, most omniscient, and most omnipresent leadership. If you do not, I will be forced to remind you that we cannot be held responsible for any polonium that goes missing and ends up in your body. Should you be gunned down on his birthday, he cannot be held responsible. Just because you were known for criticizing him, and he is known for having people killed on his birthday, doesn't mean he did it, ok? Also, I was in no way coerced into writing this, and would gladly lay down my life for even the slightest chance to just once gaze upon the joy and future of the Russian Federation, Our Glorious Vladimir Putin!

Parking Dispute Continues at UN

LARK SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT: *FRITZ VON ROOY*

It was called an “attack on democracy” by delegates from nations convening to discuss the fate of parking space 72, located in the buildings D block.

As of the early hours of Feb. 22 Russian ambassador Boris Chronkov began the occupation of space 72 by moving a “heavily blinged” Mercedes S-Class into the strategic spot, just steps from the buildings elevators. Though Chronkov has denied that the vehicle belongs to the Russians, experts have suggested the “got Borsch?” bumper sticker is a key indicator.

“It’s an incredible act of aggression,” said United States ambassador Dick Withers. “You just don’t invade another persons parking space.”

Though the space has been reserved for Ukrainian ambassadors, Chronkov has suggested that the space had always been traditionally Russian, and that its fate should be decided by popular vote. Withers, in talks with European allies, had proposed strict sanctions to thwart Russian ambition in neighbouring spaces.

More conservative proponents have suggested Withers should stand up to Chronkov by calling in a tow truck, but Withers has stated the United States aren’t interested in putting wheels on the ground, and suggested Chronkov will soon be compelled to move the vehicle out of the space due to the isolation imposed on it by Western sanctions.

Sanctions included revoking the Russians parking pass, limiting the amount of gratuities available at the UN snack bar, and excluding Chronkov from the special “water cooler” talks that take place around lunch time. Chronkov responded by threatening to cut the gas lines in Western backed vehicles.

Russian dignitaries have called US comments on the parking issue “highly hypocritical,” pointing to the US use of the Iraqi parking space, which has been an on-going issue for over a decade. “And let’s not forget they have that God-awfull Hummer double parked in the Afghani and Pakistani spaces,” said one Russian diplomat, on the condition of anonymity.

Joan Fromsky, a respected linguist and longtime parking activist has criticized both sides saying they act as any hegemonic parker would, taking the best spots for themselves, while smaller nations are forced to park at the far end of the parking lot, leaving them unable to reach meetings on time, and creating especially difficult conditions for African and Asian nations that already struggle to find spots in the crowded E lot.



Dear Autumn

Andrew Fliegel

It was autumn when I noticed your striking green eyes. They weren't the soft, luxurious, emerald hue one would assume. They were dark and cold, yet they cradled my whole world. That's about all they will let me evoke here. They want me to forget. But who could?

It's December now. I detest this taciturn, impulsive, and almost lifeless season. It's nothing like autumn; nothing like you. I was liberated then. It's all quite routine now. No freedom and no life, just bastard recurrence day in and day out. Wake up, eat, perform hours of chores, minimal recreation, eat, spirit circle, shit, eat and back to bed. I don't mind the chores too much though. I get to fold linens some days and others I pick garbage around the lot. Garbage days are my favourite. It may be frigid and dim on the outside, but I get to see the opaque barricade that deceives me from reality. I get to see how tangible the corruption of my humanity is in an extensive barbed wire fence. For the most part, it may sound like utter agony, but it's actually numbing knowing how fickle the system is; how afraid they are of someone like me. Is the meaning of love that corrupt?

The people here aren't a treat either. I can't talk to anyone. Everyone around me is so mundane, full of shame and utter regret or just feeling sorry for themselves. I don't pity my actions or anyone else's for that matter. I have no doubts about what I did. I did what I did out of esteem. Out of passion. Passion built over every moment together. You know that. I know that.

I can't exactly recollect the day first we met. I was nearly an infant. But I do remember a sort of warmth. A warmth that was always present, whether it was a bandage for my scraped knee after tumbling off my bicycle or if I was in need of a chum to accompany me in the sandbox at recess.

As we got older, you started looking out for me more. I didn't have anybody truly, but you. I remember our long walks to and from middle school together. On our way you would point out an individual and invent a crazy backstory about them. Like how they emigrated from Madagascar to spy on our government and learn the secrets of neo-capitalism. No matter how many times you sensationalized that story, I still only believed Mrs. Watters is just your average middle-class midwife.

If I were upset because Keith Brown gave me a bloody nose or called me a 'fag', you would always cheer me up with your witty remarks about the size of his wiener. My last year of middle school was the worst. I was changing and you weren't there. You were a freshman now. And I was alone. I only got to see you before and after school. It just didn't seem like enough. Who was going to cheer me up when Keith was being a jackass? You were too busy with your high school friends. Going to the Cinema, or going to eat chilli dogs at Chubby's. I understood that. We were in two different worlds now. Nevertheless, the desolation that I felt during that time was almost as depraved as here. Still, I would give anything to go back to that time. You were there.

Going into high school was a weird transition for me. I thought it would be a perfect opportunity to start fresh, but it wasn't. Keith brought my past here. I talked to one boy named Ronnie Trowell. Keith convinced Ronnie not to talk to me because I might give him my "aids". I didn't even know what AIDS were until I asked you that night. On the other hand, the amount of times I was sent home because of a bloodied nose or concussions were worth the time I spent with you. You pressed the ice on my nose ever so gently. You were always so gentle.

You use to tell me stories of all the guys who were pining after you in your Phys-Ed class. You were beautiful, who could blame them. I won't lie. There was a smidge of jealousy. I think this is when I recognized my feelings for you were different. I always cared for you as you cared for me, but this was unalike. Every time you caught my gaze my stomach felt knotted, I blushed and would scamper away. Was this love? I hadn't experienced it before. So how would I know?

It was autumn when I noticed your striking green eyes. They pierced me when you came into my bedroom that night. You never came into my bedroom. There always seemed to be a line drawn. The line was broken. The air was calm and crisp as it seeped through my cracked window. It gave me the chills. You closed my door, advanced toward me without a whisper. You sat on my bed, leaned forward, and pressed your soft lips upon mine. It gave me the chills. My second kiss. You pulled me towards you and started to kiss me more aggressively now. The gentleness I always perceived from you had whisked away in that moment. But I did not deny your advancement. Was this ok? It felt ok. Didn't it?

It was autumn when I noticed your striking green eyes. And we made love that night. It felt real; it felt right, fulfilling and physical. It was love. Passion. But you were crying? Why?

Not long during, Mum and Father swung the door open. The cold air went stale. I will never forget the look on Mum's face. It was cold like my cell. Cold like Keith's discriminatory mentions. Cold like December. Seconds later I recall a hard hit to my skull. My china lamp shattered into a million pieces over my head. Blood filled my eyelids and poured down my face. I could not see a thing. My perspective was blind.

"You Pig!" said mother.
"What did he do to you sweetheart?" said father.

Your cry was the last thing I heard before I passed out. It was the last thing I would ever hear from you.

Cries filled with indignity and shame. Or was it love? I wouldn't know. It was autumn when I noticed your striking green eyes.

It is December now. And my last one.



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The Right Kind of Drama

Dani Feraday

It isn't hard to imagine the kind of work that goes into putting on a play while you have school and other responsibilities. But that's what the Drama Club does. The director of this year's production, *The Laramie Project*, is Amber Dawn Vibert. "Directing has been stressful but rewarding," said Vibert. She directed last year's production of "A Contemporary American's Guide to a Successful Marriage in 1959". One of the challenges faced while working on the production was the advertising and promotion for the show. With a lack of advertising help from the school, the director and cast had to promote on their own. With a population as big as DC/ UOIT that becomes a difficult task. "There should be better advertising for clubs and campus events," suggested Vibert.

With ten actors playing over 60 different characters, a little stress is to be expected. A lot of work has gone into getting this production audience worthy, and you would have to imagine some issues have occurred taking over a production this size. "The cast has had difficulties but its coming together, the big issue is going scene to scene, costume changes and knowing what characters come next. Getting everyone at the same place at the same time is hard. University/college students have a hard time coming out for things because of schedules and we try to be accommodating." Amber has a lot going on as well; apart from directing the show she is a fourth year criminology student and the president of the drama club. The production is about the Matthew Shepard case of 1998; Matthew was a gay student attending the university of Wyoming, one night he was attacked and left for dead. Moises Kaufman and members of the tectonic theater project decided to go to Laramie and conduct interviews with the townspeople to get the truth and perceptions of everything that took place.

There are millions of plays to choose from for a campus production, a lot of them more care free and light then the play filled with social issues and the darkness of society they decided on. Amber shared the reason behind how they picked the *Laramie* project. "Last year we (the drama club) brainstormed ideas for the play, we wanted to do something with depth, we also wanted to do a musical but we finally decided it wasn't a good idea. There are all the issues with musical directors, getting the rights for the show, getting together to practice and learning the songs, etc. With this (*The Laramie Project*), the actors can work on their own. There are a lot of monologues and they can create their characters their own way."

Homophobia is still a big issue in society, Amber discusses her thoughts on homophobia on campus. "For students who are a lot more accepting of race, gender, sexuality but other populations of people are a lot more closed off and unaware of the issues that do exist in society in terms of homophobia and diversity". The school prides itself on being a safe and educating space for all types of people. Although there are a lot of spaces and events, awareness is a different subject. Amber voices her opinion "I feel the reach of the LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgendered, Queer) on campus can be broader, you have to be following outreach to hear about most events. Outreach try's very hard to get their events out there and to make students aware of their services. The school needs to promote all aspects of student life and student services that are available throughout DC & UOIT."

Rebirth

Janice E. McHaffie



Two Clicks.

JOHN RATHIGANTHAN

Two clicks.

That is the only sound his offerings hear before he's on them. For most of them, it's the last thing they hear. If they are lucky he ends it quickly and they feel nothing. For the brave, the pain rises to meet their valour. He prefers his morsels to be docile, compliant. He relishes their weakness.

His pleasure is not derived from the way they die; he is the artist who feel no joy in his work. He lives for its consumption. The furor that surrounds the body upon its discovery. So much fanfare for what is pretended to be a somber occasion. We should not speak ill of the dead. Yet our screens are covered by them, the sordid details of their lives, of their deaths. They are simultaneous holy and pariah. Our perversions placed upon them and paraded. They were not flesh and blood, but tidbits of information to be used and discarded. And yet he is referred to as the monster.

The recoil of the one to find the corpse as it lays there, meant for them. The way they will relive that moment for the rest of their life. The officers, jaded from years of seeing bodies. He rejoices in his contribution to their dehumanization. The coroner who must cut and slice their way through a person, and pretend this brings them no joy. This chain of events brought on by a single act, casting light into the true nature of the people involved.

The families who will bear the mark of death to everyone who sees them from that moment on. He knows some will delight in the attention brought on by their 'loss'. They will revel and wallow in the moment they are afforded. His single movement, a catalyst for them. To experience their true selves. He is not a killer. He does more than something so simple. He illuminates. Even saves his 'victims' from this system. Where emotional honesty is valued less than decency.

His is not to wonder. He is sated by knowledge. By surety. He has direction and purpose. He is a complete being. His work ignored in its intricacy. So little done, yet so much achieved. The efficiency of his activity is to be lauded, and yet it is hidden from the eye. What has he done that the rest have not? Have you not taken a life in order to live? Saying no is a falsehood. All being consume life in order to live. The nature of existence is consumption and destruction. Eating a plant is no different than an animal, or taking the life of a human. Itself an animal no better or worse than any other. And yet we place a high value on life when the light is cast on us. Except when the focus is away from us. Then human life is worth less than any other. Out of sight, out of mind. How did the disgusting filth of the world come to determine morality? Now they determine when it becomes acceptable to treat others as expendable. We gawk at their lives. Then we demonize strangers for idle mistakes or

missteps. Then we too become demons.

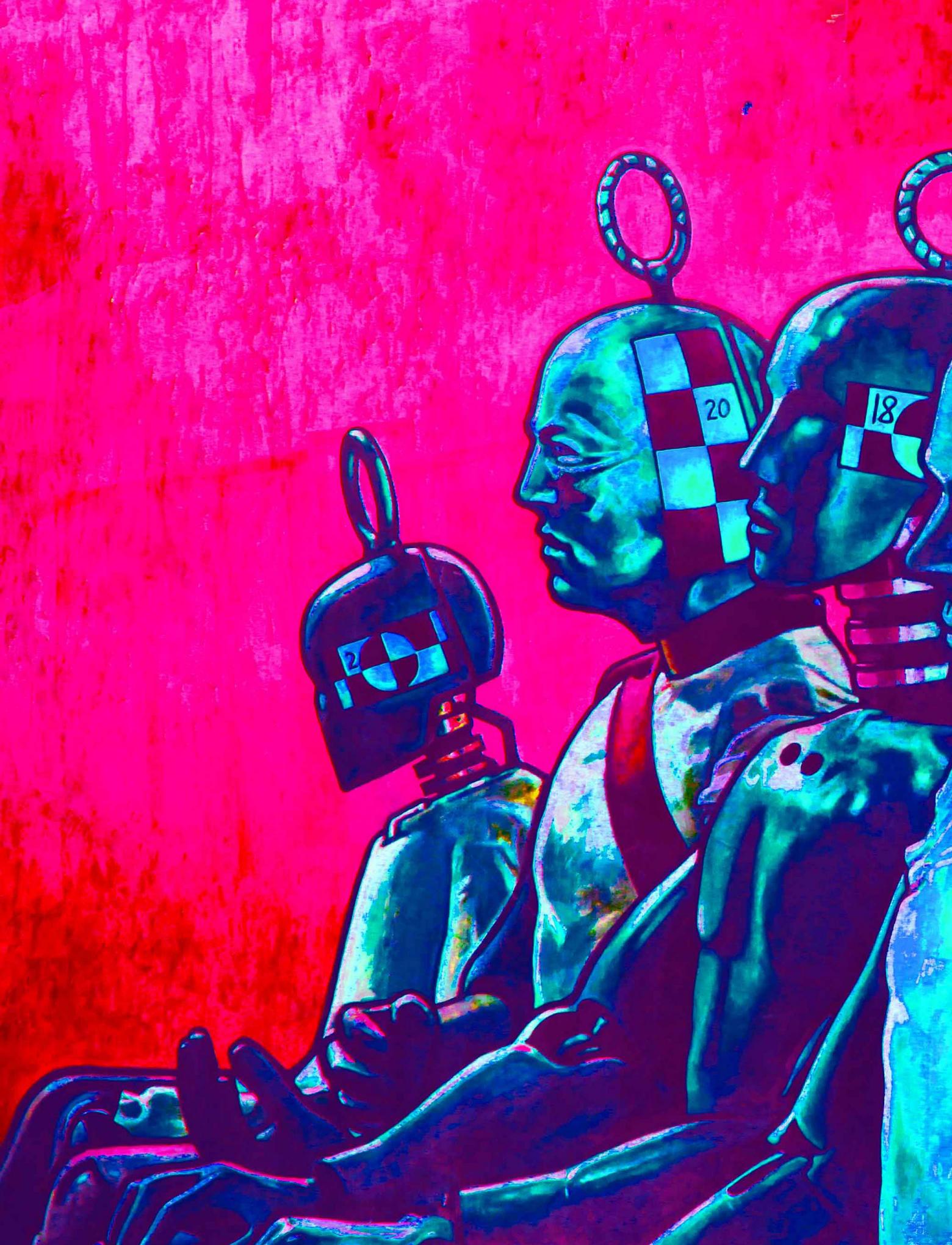
The artist claims his works carefully. He chooses them slowly and with great relish. He studies them for a great deal of time. He understands them. Begins to love them. The stubble they've grown from spending several days going from home to work with little proper rest. The way they straighten their hair when they might run into someone special. The sad eyes they made in reflections reminding them of lost youth. Dangling a shoe while waiting for a bus. Shirts, skirts, ties, shawls, briefcases. Their accoutrements that 'scream' personality. He loves their self-expression. Chooses them carefully for the quality of their souls..

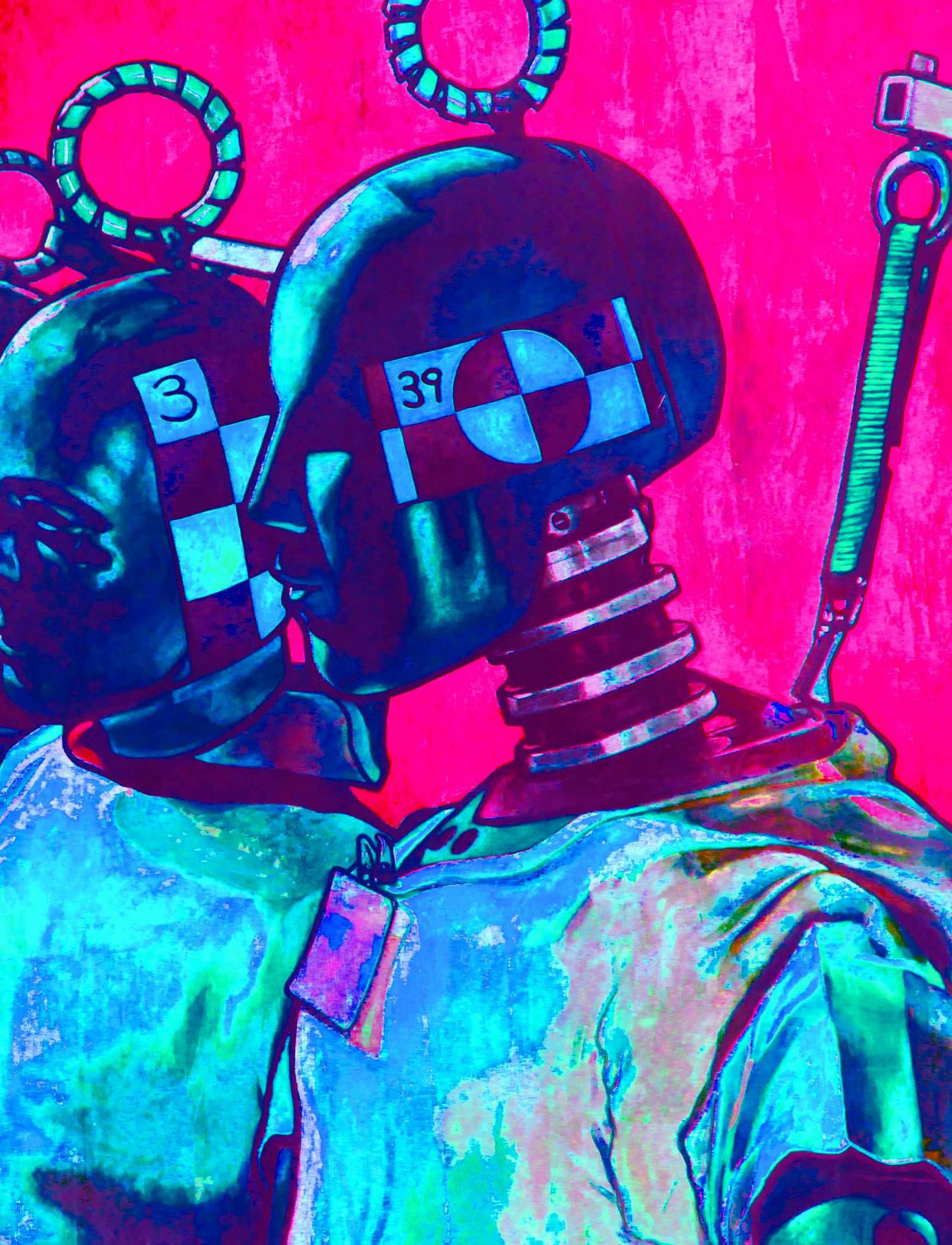
Soft skin, sometimes filled with wrinkles formed by experience; sometimes devoid of features and eager for the ravages of time to fill them with stories. Under a loving knife, no skin is truly rough.

The collapse of the meat as their spark leaves the world. He enjoys studying the transition from life to remnant.

The true joy in art, is the moment when the work is about to begin. The hovering above the canvas. Waiting for something within to urge us forward. When that time arrives:







Slam-Fade*MIKKI DECKER*

The moment you touched my skin it
felt as though this was destiny.
This was meant to be.

You see it hurts and its confusing but
with one glide this become a little
more clear.
This pain begins to fade.

Fading..that's an interesting thought
don't you think? As if I were in a car
watching you from the back seat drift
further and further from my reach.
I would take that path everyday if it
meant you would
eventually disappear.

Scars never disappear, or at least the
ones we create ourselves don't.
This never seems fair and it hurts to
know that you don't suffer.

If I could stand tall and scream the
questions that are hidden deep to the
rest of the world..I would crumble.

You have made me silent and creat-
ed a disguise with your own inten-
tions.
I hope this doesn't last much longer
because I am beginning to fade.

These scars are getting deeper and

they take longer to heal.

I'm not proud of this but I'm still here
and right now that's enough.

I would be lying if I said this didn't
make me feel something, make me
feel alive...or maybe I'm starting to
mix that feeling up with what it really
feels like to lose hope.

I'm finished for the night and as I
close my eyes I dream of waking up,
looking in the mirror and seeing that
this was all a dream.

It's not a dream and you are still my
reality.

Thoughts on Russia: Opinion*MIKKI DECKER*

In the last two years that I have spent at Durham College I was able to become very involved in the LGBTQ community. The first year I spent trying to find safe spaces and people that could relate to the things I was going through as a student. The second year I ended up taking on the chair position of the Pride Committee where I was in charge of a team of students who joined me in planning and implementing events for students on campus. These events varied in choice and were always a safe space for all allies and identifying students to come and have a good time.

The LGBTQ community is a very strong passion of mine as I am going into the Child and Youth Working field, and this is one of the reasons I'm doing so. I want to work with LGBTQ youth in care and help them during their own personal journeys. I want to ensure that there are enough resources and supports for any youth that already identify or are trying to figure out their own sexuality. It is very important to me that the youth in our welfare system are treated with the respect they deserve in regards to these issues.

This year while in college I learned about a lot of unfortunate events that are occurring around the world that, unfortunately, I cannot change. One of the main issues that has happened this year is in Russia. On June 30 this year, Russian president Vladimir Putin signed into law a bill banning the "propaganda of nontraditional sexual relations to minors," thus opening a new, dark chapter in the history of gay rights in Russia. The law caps a period of

ferocious activities by the Russian government aimed at limiting the rights of the country's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex people.

When I think about these issues and the way in which we as a community can change the way we address the problems we face it's always in a proactive manner. The only option for change is when the people who are being suppressed or silenced stand up and speak out for equality. There is always a place and time for doing this, and in a way that is powerful. When I think about the issues in Russia, and ways in which we can start to mend the damage that has been done, it always comes back to the power of change. Being proactive means that we are able to think outside of the box and be ahead of the creators of injustice. Instead of ranting and criticizing Russia, I would much rather educate and create awareness around the issue at hand. Making allies is very important and to do that we need to speak in educated, passionate, and loud voices. We need to speak in general. I think that we have been doing a good job of doing that. Having this article is just another small step to change. When people are willing to speak and talk about issues is when change can be created and justice be served.

What is happening in Russia is a cruel reality, and what we are doing here in Canada about it is a beautiful thing. More of these actions are necessary.



The Tale of the Horrid Wound

GIORGIO BERBATIOTIS

There's a story in our town about the old postal clerk whose left hand is scarred in such striking fashion as to resemble a demonic wound, truly fiendish in its encroachment on a good man's hand. Having known the man since before my years serving in the Great War, when I was but a child, I'm well aware of the tales the children spin. But the tale I've heard from the older folks is exceedingly insidious, and they say it came from the old clerk himself when he was a younger lad. The old clerk now would never speak of his heinous wound's cause, nor is he addressed much at all being a reclusive old widower who's long outlived his peers. Save for whittling on his modest porch and hunting rabbits some years ago, he's seldom seen at all in our time.

I first heard the true tale of the old clerk's wretched wound from our barber on a midwinter night as some local gentlemen and I had gathered for drinks. The barber himself was an old man but still some twenty years the junior of the ancient clerk and had himself grown up with the strange tales about the old clerks morbid wound. Despite the childish nature of most of the stories, he told us that he had heard the truth about the hideous wound come from the old clerk himself on a night not too dissimilar to our own.

When the clerk was in his early forties he had come into the very same pub we were in then, a staple of local life; The Hangman's Hood. The barber, being then a younger lad, had been heavily drinking with his fellows and struck up conversation with the clerk. As the night went on and the emptied glasses piled, one of the barber's fellows asked the clerk to tell what had happened to his cursed hand for he'd heard such wild tales as a child. As the pub around them consumed itself in its continued rowdiness the table hushed and eyes slowly rose to meet the hollowed stare of the clerk. The younger men gathered closer round and exchanged sparse quick glances before refocusing on the clerk, whose right hand tenderly pet the back of the wounded left as he opened his mouth

to speak, and shuddered. A gnarled piece of the wound began to twitch. His pulse was visible through the swollen veins. It pushed up the thick scabs like heaving lungs under plated armour as he spoke:

**"She was beautiful but
her skin was cracked like
a desert floor and flakes
of her blew off and rose
up like the embers of a
flame."**

"When I was about eight years of age, I lived in a distant mountain town. I use to run errands for the local townsfolk and would often bring them their mail. I was a happy and eager child, curious and popular, crafty and adventurous. The other kids got caught for any trouble we'd cause so I kept a good name too. One day a letter came in for a stranger man than I. When I was young we had stories about him, he was our town's coroner. He was part of that innovative wave of people who changed our world, a man of science and reason known for his experiments with electrical mechanics and an unequaled proficiency in human anatomy." The clerk's words were without emotion and his tone professorial, as if recounting the details of a historic event. The barber and his companions were entranced by each word, huddled around the older man who gulped from his glass and continued. "I was quite intimidated by the prospect of entering the coroner's home, for although the dead were not stored near his house he had many strange instruments from the various fields of scientific inquiry there and as I said, us children had stories about him. His home was thought to be a place of unrelenting horrors. So I paced the street filled with dread, stopping to talk to all I knew as I continued down the avenue that led to his house. When I arrived I found the door ajar, so I entered.

His narrow foyer was flanked by white walls stained yellow with time. They were peppered with the curled peeling edges of wallpaper rising above a

dusty hardwood floor. To my left was a sitting room packed with ruffled bookshelves and small desks covered in disorganized notes, chemical instruments and charts. Ahead of me was a dingy staircase leading to a basement, to the right an elegant dining room leading to the rest of the house. It was clear the coroner had hosted no guests in a long time, and then I heard him call out from below, "Come downstairs!" His voice was strained. "I'm rather engaged at the moment!"

"My friends I was terrified. I approached the narrow steep staircase and saw now the shadows at the base of the stair, periodically flaring with the sounds of a torch. In the background one could hear the hums and whirs of mechanical instruments. I descended and saw before me the man I'd been dreading, and held out my arm with his mail in hand. His torch had just extinguished, and I focused on his face. I couldn't see his eyes through the glare of the kerosene lamp in his thick blowtorch goggles. His face was covered in black ash. Wild pepper grey hair flew out from above a thick brow. He slowly approached, grabbed the mail, and placed it on a desk nestled in a corner of the room. 'Thank you young man' he said, seeming intent to return to his torch work.

"My heart began to race as I took the opportunity to look around the basement laboratory. A little way from where the coroner was pursuing his torch work there was a long metallic table. On its own it was most curious with a shifting, brownish hued surface, that resembled gasoline. But most thrilling was that from its strange surface, a face was miraculously rising out. It appeared to be that of a young woman. She was beautiful but her skin was cracked like a desert floor and flakes of her blew off and rose up like the embers of a flame. The scientist seemed to notice my shock and addressed me. 'You can see her?' he seemed in awe of me, almost afraid. 'I can't imagine what you're experiencing now!' he continued excitedly.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 17

The Last Phoenix

ERIC TYUKODI

Her name was Kibou, and she was the last Phoenix to roam the skies above earth. She was a very old creature, and though she could not speak, in her memories were recorded almost a whole millennia of history. She had spent much of this time as far away from humans as possible, so there are few accounts of her life outside of stories which had been passed down from generation to generation. Tales of her appearance usually coincided with an occurrence of great importance. For Kibou and her kind brought light wherever they roamed, and often took pity upon mankind.

Many ancient cultures held the Phoenix in high regard, and many even prayed to them. As the march of time and progress continued, the idea that such magnificent creatures should be worshipped was seen as a romantic anachronism; after all they had learned to fear humans and fled to the uninhabited regions of this planet. The tales and stories of the majestic firebirds fell from common knowledge and were only held by those who kept to the old ways.

My family were lucky enough to have kept some such stories. I was born in Japan, in a coastal town, in the year 1930. I still remember my grandfather telling me stories about the ancient beings that used to appear to men, about dragons and princesses, or of Bushido and the courage of the samurai. But by far the most treasured story of my childhood was of the great bird that appeared to my grandfather's ancestor, almost five hundred years before.

On the eve before a great battle, a young samurai warrior walked out underneath the moonlight, feeling certain that his death would arrive come the morning. He did not fear his fate, he simply wished to see the beauty of the starlight for one last time. As he gazed up at the sky above him, my grandfather told me, one of the stars seemed to break away from the rest and crash down towards the earth. Right before it collided with the ground, a great flash struck the ground like a thunderbolt. Covering his eyes, the samurai turned away from the blinding light. The light began to lessen, and a sudden warmth seemed to caress his skin. As he looked back before him, he saw a strange creature perched on a tree before him. Its body resembled an eagle, although far larger, with bright red plumage and tail feathers of bright orange and gold. Its black eyes and beak shone in the twilight. The bird had a long neck, almost like a swan's, and its tail feathers were long and flowing. However, the most incredible aspect of the creature was that it appeared to be wreathed in flame. It stared at my ancestor and he felt the gaze of its intelligence, the spark of a being that had seen much with its dark eyes.

Having survived the battle the following day, the warrior retreated deep into the hills to seek the creature, but no trace of it could be found. For the rest of his days he longed to gaze into the eyes of the mythical fire-bird once more. Despite his sadness at never seeing the creature again, he was gifted with good fortune and health for the remainder of his life, and he never forgot the beauty of the

bird's appearance. My grandfather called the creature one of the Fenghuang, which I later learnt was called a Phoenix by the rest of the world, and that there was a history of them within our culture. He also said that our family was blessed, as many of my ancestors, including my grandfather, lived remarkably long and healthy lives. The tale of the encounter with the spirit had been passed down from one generation to the next, to always be thankful for what one has, to never give up on hope, and always remember that we do not understand all that occurs in the natural world. He was convinced this creature granted our ancestors this good fortune and long life.

My father usually mocked my grandfather for what he deemed childish interpretations. I, however, was not as easily dissuaded. I never gave up my sense of wonder, and I held onto the stories my grandfather told me with eager ears. I remember trying to find the mythical bird of fire as a boy, sometimes running far away from home, but I never got a glimpse of it. Not until my fifteenth year of life.

I remembered a hill that I enjoyed to walk on, for it overlooked my village and the ocean that lay beyond it. I came here often, and on this particular day there was a beautiful breeze blowing out over the bay. As I sat there, watching the waves and the ships, I felt a presence behind me. As I turned, I was filled with warmth and I remember being blinded for several seconds. When my eyes came back to normal, there was a bright red shape sitting before me on the ground. I can still smell the burning grass and singed ground. I was shocked. The red bird sat there before me, staring into my eyes.

It was just as my grandfather had told! Feathers of red, orange, and yellow shone with empyrean brilliance. The vast wings lay folded; nestled above great tail feathers which seemed to dance in the wind like flames themselves. Her slender neck ended with a crested head of brilliant crimson plumage, highlighting a noble face with eyes and beak of absolute darkness. And all around the bird, the air seemed to shimmer and distort, while embers and bits of ash rose into the sky. The bird was real, and was indeed immolated, though not as greatly as the stories had led me to believe.

As I gazed upon its beautiful form, I was unaware of the sound of the sirens. Time seemed to slow down and the warmth from the sun began to fade. The only thing I could feel was the heat from the fire of the Phoenix. It seemed to envelope me. I still remember the feeling of being lost in that dark, compassionate gaze.

It turned away from me just as the flash occurred. It was silent at first, and then there was a great rumbling. Everything seemed to shake. The blindness I had felt when I saw the Phoenix came again, this time more potent than before. It was as if another sun had appeared. I screamed, but I felt the air move as the Phoenix beat its wings in front of me. The world seemed to roar, and then there came silence and darkness.

That day the world knew the name of my village.

Nagasaki would be remembered in infamy. When I finally came to, I was surrounded by ash and fire. I did my best to seek shelter from the intense heat, but to my astonishment I was not burnt by the flames nor was I afflicted with the sickness that would soon take so many of the survivors in my village. I alone survived out of my family. Of the Phoenix, there was no sign.

For years I wondered why the Fenghuang had spared me. Why had this mystical being appeared to save me from the inferno? What connection did it possess to my family? Perhaps it wanted me to tell this story, to try and inspire others to believe as I did when I was a youthful child. I am no longer youthful. With the help of my sons, I have written this account, now that I am in my eighty-fourth year of life. While I still feel hale at heart, I wished to see this recorded while the memory was still alive. I hope this translation is an adequate retelling of my experience.

You may be thinking why I have spoken so blatantly about the finality of the passing of the Fenghuang. Why this story, if it can be called that, is titled The Last Phoenix. Of all the memories I have collected in my life, the most vibrant one is of that fateful day. I will never forget the blinding flash of the bird's appearance, the smell of burning grass, the soulful gleam in its eyes. As it stared at me, and I back at it, I knew in my bones that this was the same spirit, the same Fenghuang, which my ancestor had seen that night centuries ago. I also could see a longing for peace within its eyes. I know more about these legendary

creatures now than I did in my youth, and understand that the stories claimed they could live for incredibly long lives. However, when they did pass from this world, their fires consumed them, and a new, more brilliant bird would then arise from the ashes of its forbearer.

Perhaps the bird did not simply appear to me by coincidence that day. I believe that she knew something was coming, something that would change the fate of all things that drew breathe. For on that day, mankind suddenly acquired the means to end all life on our planet. She must have known what was going to happen that day. She wanted me to survive and pass on a message. Something that people could believe in. That is why I have called her Kibou: Kibou is the Japanese word for hope. From the ashes of that attack, I miraculously survived. The beauty of Kibou and her sacrifice was not lost to me.

Since that day, I have tried to teach others that there is more to this world than what we can see. I taught my children that we would always need stories and tales of our past. They were important to us not just because of their cultural significance, but because of the lessons we learn from them, and also because I believe people will always need things to believe in, no matter how trivial or fantastical they may seem at the time. I believed in Kibou my entire life, and she saved me. Though life can sometimes be cruel, it can also be beautiful; as long as we have hope.

Feelings

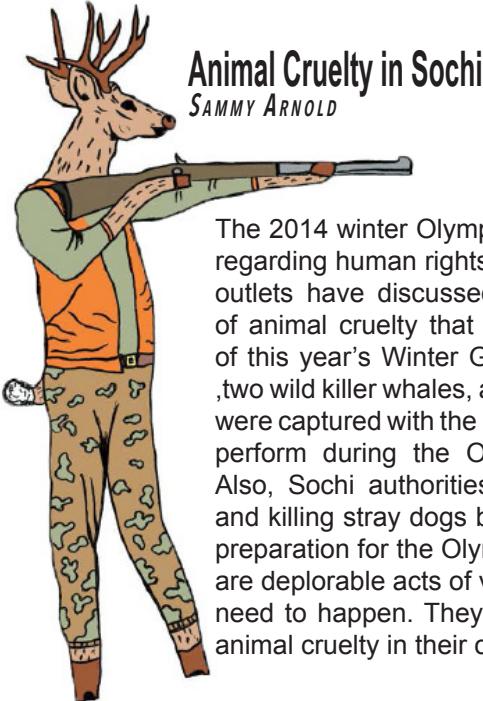
JANICE E. McHAFFIE

Sadness welled up from my feet,
Coursed through my legs,
Churned around my stomach,
Squeezed by my heart,
Pulled my shoulders down,
Trembled past my lips,
And dripped out of my eyes!

Happiness bounced my feet,
Skipped up through my legs,
Tingled my tummy,
Swelled my heart,
Lifted my shoulders,
Giggled past my lips,
And shone out of my eyes!

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Animal Cruelty in Sochi

SAMMY ARNOLD

The 2014 winter Olympics were an atrocity regarding human rights. However, very few outlets have discussed the terrible cases of animal cruelty that were a direct result of this year's Winter Games. For example, two wild killer whales, also known as orcas, were captured with the intent of having them perform during the Olympic ceremonies. Also, Sochi authorities were rounding up and killing stray dogs by poisoning them in preparation for the Olympics. Both of these are deplorable acts of violence which didn't need to happen. They are both senseless animal cruelty in their own respects.

Until recently, there has been very little media attention regarding the use of wild animals as entertainment and phrases such as "Captivity Kills" were virtually unheard of. Documentaries such as "Earthlings", "The Cove" and "Blackfish" have opened people's eyes to the cruelty involved in keeping wild animals captive. Originally, the Sochi opening ceremonies were going to include the use of two orcas. They were caught from the wild with the intent of performing in the ceremonies but due to public backlash it was decided last minute not to include them; too little too late Sochi.

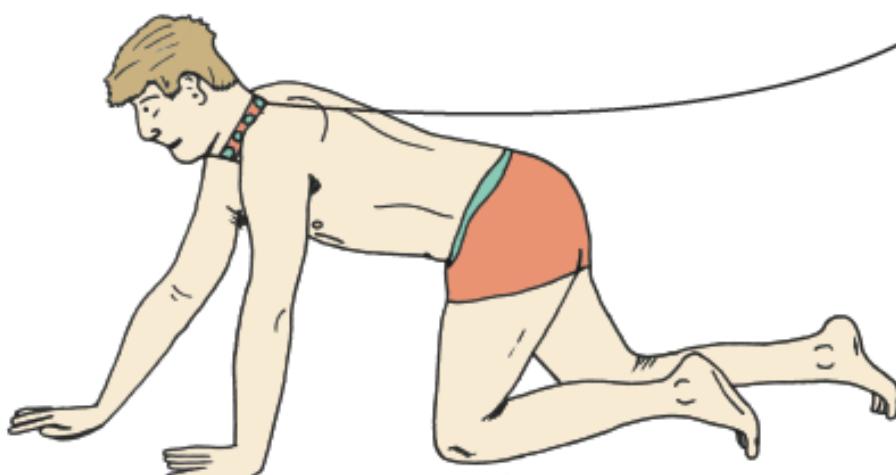
Orcas are highly emotional beings, recent studies indicate orcas are likely to be more sentient than humans. Capturing orcas from the wild tears them from their pods (family members) which causes high emotional stress for both the orcas left behind and those taken. Forcing wild animals into captivity was the wrong thing to do. It's not the fact that they were to be used in the ceremony that the animal right's community had the issue with, it's the fact that they are now in captivity. At least they are assumed to be in captivity, as their whereabouts are currently unknown.

Also according to local citizens Sochi has always had street dogs, but in December of last year eye witnesses

began reporting that authorities were poisoning the animals. Their reports state symptoms from the dogs such as barking in fear and pain, convulsions, lack of coordination, running around in circles and spitting up.

On February 5th, CNN posted a disturbing video of several stray dogs which depict symptoms that indicated they had been poisoned. Judging from reports, Sochi has had a stray dog problem for a long time, so why were they even considered for hosting the Olympics? Most people have had a canine companion or family member over the years, so we know that dogs are highly emotional and sentient beings. Is the mass murder of homeless dogs really worth it when there are so many other cities worldwide who could have hosted the Olympic Games in 2014?

There is at least one good story to come from this atrocity. American silver medalist skier Gus Kenworthy has adopted a litter of four puppies and their mother. He came across them as stray dogs in the streets of Sochi and said he knew the authorities were poisoning the dogs so he decided to bring the family home with him. Kenworthy is going to be adopting one of the puppies while finding good homes for the mother and other three.



The Tale of the Horrid Wound...Continued from page 13

GIORGIO BERBATIOTIS

Back in the Hangman's Hood more young men and some of the barmaids had joined in listening to the barber retell the old clerk's tale. We were enthralled by the story, and wondered at what mystery lay behind the macabre wound that had so captured the imaginations of our town's youth.

"I can't explain to you by what logic I did not run away at that very moment. I was already lost. Even the last words of the excited coroner seemed drowned out by the sight of the lady rising from the table's surface. She seemed almost to be floating, as if on the seabed of a violent wreck, her hair swaying as if with the waves. A glowing light came from her that drowned out the room and seemed to submerge me. I could hear now a rushing of water breaking over rocks on a fast-flowing river. The lady had now risen completely above the table tethered to it at the toes so that she tilted towards me, her hair flying wildly back. The rushing sounds intensified and I could hear below them a heavy pulse, perhaps my own, coaxing me to move towards the table. I reached out.

"My hand suddenly felt heavy and I found myself beside the table. My hastening pulse loudened as my hand neared to touch it. I became enraptured and intensely focused on the beauty and subversive glow of the rising lady, before distracted by a pull and itching thirst. My attention was brought back to my hand which had been drawn to the table and now the tips of my fingers had lightly touched its surface. Though the fingers barely touched, by some power I could not put the effort in to lift them away. I stared terrified at my ineffective arm that would not lift. As I put all my concentration on my stiffened hand I was overcome by a fear of death and thought it was certain I would now die. "This is when my thirst became most intense. I looked up from my

hand in desperate search for a final drink and saw the lips of the lady had parted in relief. They were no longer dry, her glow was brighter; my hand heavier. The cracks in her skin began to smooth; my thirst was incredible. I stared now more intently than ever before at my hand willing it to pull away. Its mass seemed immense, as if my hand was fastened to the table by magnetism. At that moment, I heard the tolling of the church bell and this brought me back to my surroundings where the coroner continued fiddling hurriedly with the instruments.

**"I can't explain to you by what logic I did not run away at that very moment.
I was already lost... My hastening pulse loudened as my hand neared to touch it. I became enraptured and intensely focused on the beauty and subversive glow of the rising lady,"**

"My pulse was throbbing in my veins now. Its rushing sound and the amber glow of the lady consumed me again but I felt my hand once more. I gave a final effort, ripping it from the clutches of the table. The flesh to the bones was torn onto the table's surface as I fell back in pain clutching my hand. I was thrown into an incoherent world of dreams. What flesh remained regrew in time to this cursed state and though I lost much blood I did not die. The skin of the lady returned to its cracked state and she began to sink once more into the table. The ambient glow began to slowly drain out of the room and I stumbled up now and made for the stairs moving incoherently but conscious once again. My breath was heavy but I scrambled up

the steep steps. As I ran for the door in the hall I noticed now a dusty portrait of the coroner. He was a groom, and beside him the lady smiling. I fainted within seconds screaming, just outside the front door as my frantic fumbling sprint led to collapse.

"When I awoke some days later in hospital, doctors chastised me for my 'curious behavior and reckless endangerment.' They informed me I was lucky I hadn't died in an explosion for which I'd been blamed during my unconscious state. The coroner's house had been destroyed as the townsfolk approached me there hearing my screams. The coroner himself survived. I saw him when he spoke to officers, doctors and family gathered there. 'Of course I shall press no charges' he politely chimed with my father and an officer, 'The boy has an inquisitive mind. He's suited for work in the field of scientific inquiry!' With that he turned to me, 'Those chemicals you were fooling around with, young man, must have given you such feverish dreams.'

"And so he never spoke of it again, knowing none would believe his story." The barber said, finished his retelling of the old clerk's tale. The gathered broke out into discussion concerning the new version. There were arguments over its likelihood and whether the barber was raving or not.

For me however, the story struck a different chord. It was 1918 and I was 25, returned from the western front. I had been hit by the gas. Though I was lucky, in that I survived while those around me died, I was left with severe burns along my cheek, neck and arms. I wondered at whether the children would tell such wild tales about my condition. I hoped so. I'd rather that than letting them know the grueling truth of the war; what happened to me, to their fathers and brothers, on the fields where they died.

Thoughts on Fracking

ARTIFICE CROWN

Fracking is a method of oil extraction, which is unethical and ultimately an infringement of human rights, because fracking is conducted on sensitive lands. The destruction of environmentally sensitive land infinges on not only the green contract that affects all humans, but also treaties enshrining dignity for First Nations people of Canada. The Mi'kmaq way of life is not only desacralized by the prospect of a shale gas site, but human rights, the right to natural food sources, and the right to life in general are all in jeopardy.

Cultural imperialism and violence are at the core of post-colonial Canada. Militarized policing strategies, mass arrest of protestors, and little political regard in Parliament for the First Nations people of Canada illustrates the imperial and violent nature of social control. Institutional social control that seeks to protect of the capital investment became evident when 40 Aboriginal activists protesting against a prospective shale gas site were arrested near Rexton, New Brunswick on October 17, 2013.

There are innumerable accounts of human rights violations by institutions of government, which have scourged the people of the planet. Whether the human rights violation is in form of legal punishment for gay athletes at the 2014

Sochi Olympics or the war crimes committed against Syrian civilians by the Assad Regime, governments remain as the common element. The many undocumented human rights violations that scourge its people are also violations that undermine Natural Law, which preserves the planet and keeps it beautiful.

Thus, the desire for wealth by perverse capitalists (i.e. Enbridge) will stop at nothing to profit from Fracking – all at the expense of Aboriginal Canadians. The use of militarized police and violent strategies illustrates the extent institutional social control can be used to protect prospective profits for Enbridge. This cultural imperialism and violence is the essence of oppression, which undermines the human rights that are endowed to all Canadians through the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and by the earth itself.

I say again, the practice of fracking breaks the green contract - threatening the ecological stability of the region and thus the natural order of the planet. The capitalist and colonialist epistemology of late modernity is endangering people and the planet. Without them, the concept of the contract, colonialism, or even love would cease to exist. Take heed, take a deep breath, and utilize social justice – the contract can always be returned to its original form if you make it so!

Vladimir Putin Horoscopes

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ARIES

YOUR INSOLENCE WILL BE REWARDED WITH A RICIN-TIPPED UMBRELLA. CROSSING A BRIDGE BRINGS YOU TO A PAINFULL PLACE IN YOUR LIFE.

TAURUS

YOUR CONSTANT CRITICISMS ENRAGE AN ENEMY. BEWARE OF BIRTHDAYS, GUNS, AND HONEST JOURNALISM.

GEMINI

YOUR GREED WILL BE YOUR UNDOING. AN AUTHORITARIAN FIGURE TAKES CREDIT FOR EVERYTHING YOU'VE DONE. HE ALSO TAKES YOUR MONEY, COMPANY AND PROPERTY... AND THROWS YOU IN PRISON.

CANCER

YOUR OWN PEOPLE TURN AGAINST YOU, AND OUTSIDERS INVADE YOUR LAND CLANDESTINELY. DON'T WORRY THOUGH! THESE S-300 MISSILES SHOULD HELP KEEP THE PLEBS IN THEIR PLACE.

LEO

A SYMBOL OF VICTORY IS LOST TO YOU. IF YOU LIKED IT SO MUCH, WHY WOULD YOU LET SOMEONE ELSE HOLD IT? THAT IS PRETTY MUCH AGREEING TO GIVE IT AWAY AS A GIFT.

VIRGO

VIRGO'S ARE A CREATION OF WESTERN PROPAGANDA. THERE ARE NO ACTUAL VIRGO'S. REPENT YOUR SINFULL WAYS AND BE A LEO OR LIBRA.

LIBRA

YOUR PATHETIC REBELLION WILL SOON BE CRUSHED. JUST WHO IN THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU ARE? YOU BEST SURRENDER NOW AND FLEE TO THE SOUTHERN CAUCASUS OR SOMETHING.

SCORPIO

IF YOU DON'T START WARMING UP TO THOSE IN POWER, YOU'LL HAVE A HARD TIME WARMING UP NEXT WINTER. DON'T FORGET WHO CONTROLS THE GAS LINES.

SAGITTARIUS

YOU MAY THINK YOU HAVE ESCAPED, AND THAT YOU ARE SAFE WITH YOUR NEW FRIENDS. BUT YOU'D BE SURPRISED HOW EASILY POLONIUM CAN END UP IN YOUR BLOODSTREAM

CAPRICORN

IF YOU DON'T CHANGE YOUR MIND ABOUT A FINANCIAL MATTER, YOU MIGHT FIND IT CHANGED FOR YOU. OTHERWISE YOU MIGHT FIND YOUR MIND SPLATTERED ACROSS A WALL; CHOICE IS YOURS REALLY.

AQUARIUS

SUCCESS COMES WITH A PRICE. LIKE BEING AN OLYMPIC GYMNAST. SURE SOME PEOPLE SAY ITS GREAT AND HONOURABLE, BUT THEN YOU END UP DATING THIS 50-SOMETHING WORLD LEADER WITH A NUCLEAR WEAPONS ARSENAL AND A JEALOUS STREAK.

PISCES

YOU MAY FIND YOURSELF MORE ISOLATED THAN USUAL. DON'T WORRY, AS LONG AS YOU HAVE A MASSIVE OIL AND NATURAL GAS SUPPLY PEOPLE WILL HAVE TO KEEP PRETENDING TO LIKE YOU. KEEP ON BEING YOU!

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