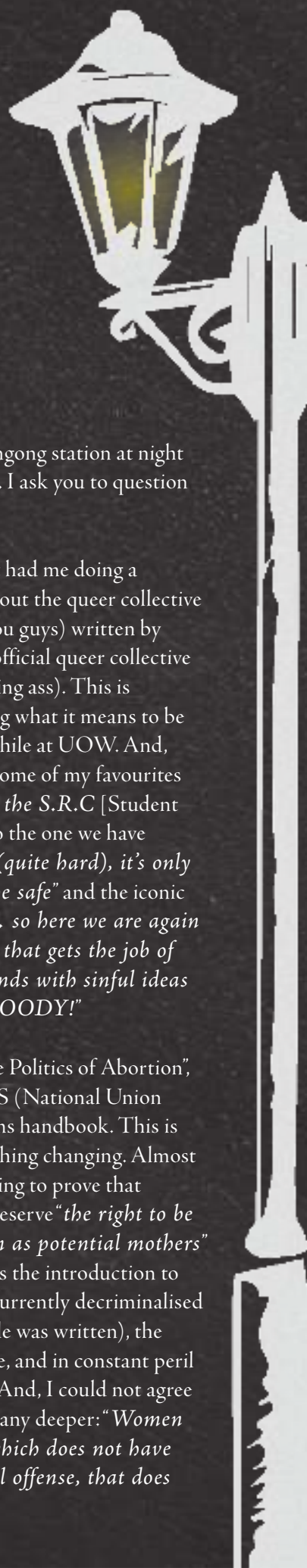


something wyrd



In early March, I spent some time cleaning up the Women's Space ready for the start of semester. I was digging through a tub full of papers... and then something caught my eye. It was a magazine, the cover featuring a grainy photo of a young girl, and some swirly purple text. "wyrd" was written across the page with a date below: 1997-1998.

Holy shit!

The top-left corner provided some more context: "*University of Wollongong Women's Handbook*".

I excitedly began rifling through the pages.

First was a blurb from the Women's Officer (Rebecca Nissim). This is an introduction to the tone and content of the magazine: some discussion of student life at UOW and support services/groups that were available. Including this amazing line:

"Regardless of what side of the gender divide you sit, most students come to Uni (at least) some of the time, stress about assignments, don't have much money, eat, starve, drink, smoke, party, hassle the ducks, admire the scenery and choke on Wollongong's special blend of BHP pollutant cocktail (made up of 11 secret carcinogenic chemicals and spices...)"

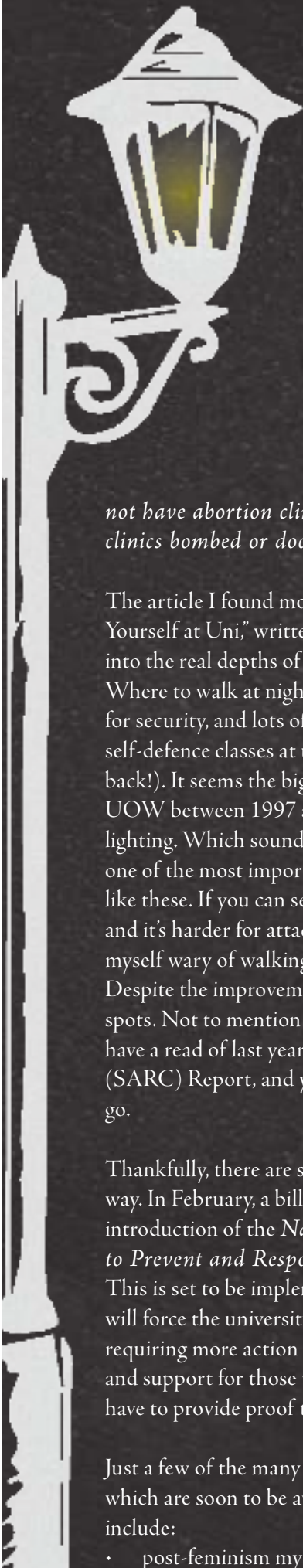
I guess not much has changed (and this will certainly not be the last time I can say that). There's a subheading in the final part of this blurb: "*And now to the really drastic stuff...*"

Here, Nissim outlines important DOs and DONTs. These include not letting people screw you over, reporting incidents, and imploring students to avoid walking

around campus or to North Wollongong station at night (primarily to avoid sexual violence). I ask you to question how much of that has changed.

The next article I'd like to highlight had me doing a double take. "Queer Bits", a piece about the queer collective Allsorts (shout out to y'all, I love you guys) written by Bronwyn Dann. At this point, the official queer collective was in its infancy (and already kicking ass). This is another great guide piece, discussing what it means to be queer and how you can explore it while at UOW. And, of course, it is endlessly quotable. Some of my favourites are: "*Our sexuality officer lives in the S.R.C [Student Representative Council, different to the one we have today] and although he does bite (quite hard), it's only consenting adults so you should be safe*" and the iconic introduction to the article itself: "*... so here we are again at the naughty page, and it is me that gets the job of corrupting all your fresh little minds with sinful ideas and notions about sexuality... GOODY!*"

Turning over the page, we find "The Politics of Abortion", a reprint of an article from the NUS (National Union of Students) Reproductive Freedoms handbook. This is perhaps the clearest example of nothing changing. Almost thirty years later, and we're still having to prove that women (and those with uteruses) deserve "*the right to be treated as individuals rather than as potential mothers*" (a quote from Kristin Luker, used as the introduction to this article). Although abortion is currently decriminalised in Australia (unlike when this article was written), the accessibility remains much the same, and in constant peril of being restricted more and more. And, I could not agree with this article's closing statement any deeper: "*Women should have a right to a society which does not have a medical procedure as a criminal offense, that does*



not have abortion clinics picketed, that does not have clinics bombed or doctors involved murdered."

The article I found most interesting is titled "Fending For Yourself at Uni," written by Jodie Martire. This piece gets into the real depths of the safe and unsafe place on campus. Where to walk at night, where not to walk. How to call for security, and lots of encouragement to join the free self-defence classes at uni (we totally need to bring those back!). It seems the biggest difference in terms of safety at UOW between 1997 and 2025 is the amount of outdoor lighting. Which sounds strange, but adequate lighting is one of the most important safety features for public spaces like these. If you can see, you can make better decisions, and it's harder for attackers to hide. And yet, I still find myself wary of walking back to my car on winter nights. Despite the improvements, it still is quite dark in some spots. Not to mention the campus is still far from safe: just have a read of last year's Safe and Respectful Communities (SARC) Report, and you'll see we still have a long way to go.

Thankfully, there are some positive developments on the way. In February, a bill was passed in Parliament for the introduction of the *National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence*. This is set to be implemented over the next few years, and will force the university to adhere to strict rules and roles requiring more action to prevent acts of sexual violence, and support for those who have been affected. They'll also have to provide proof that they're actually doing this!

Just a few of the many other interesting articles (all of which are soon to be available on The Tert website!) include:

- post-feminism my arse

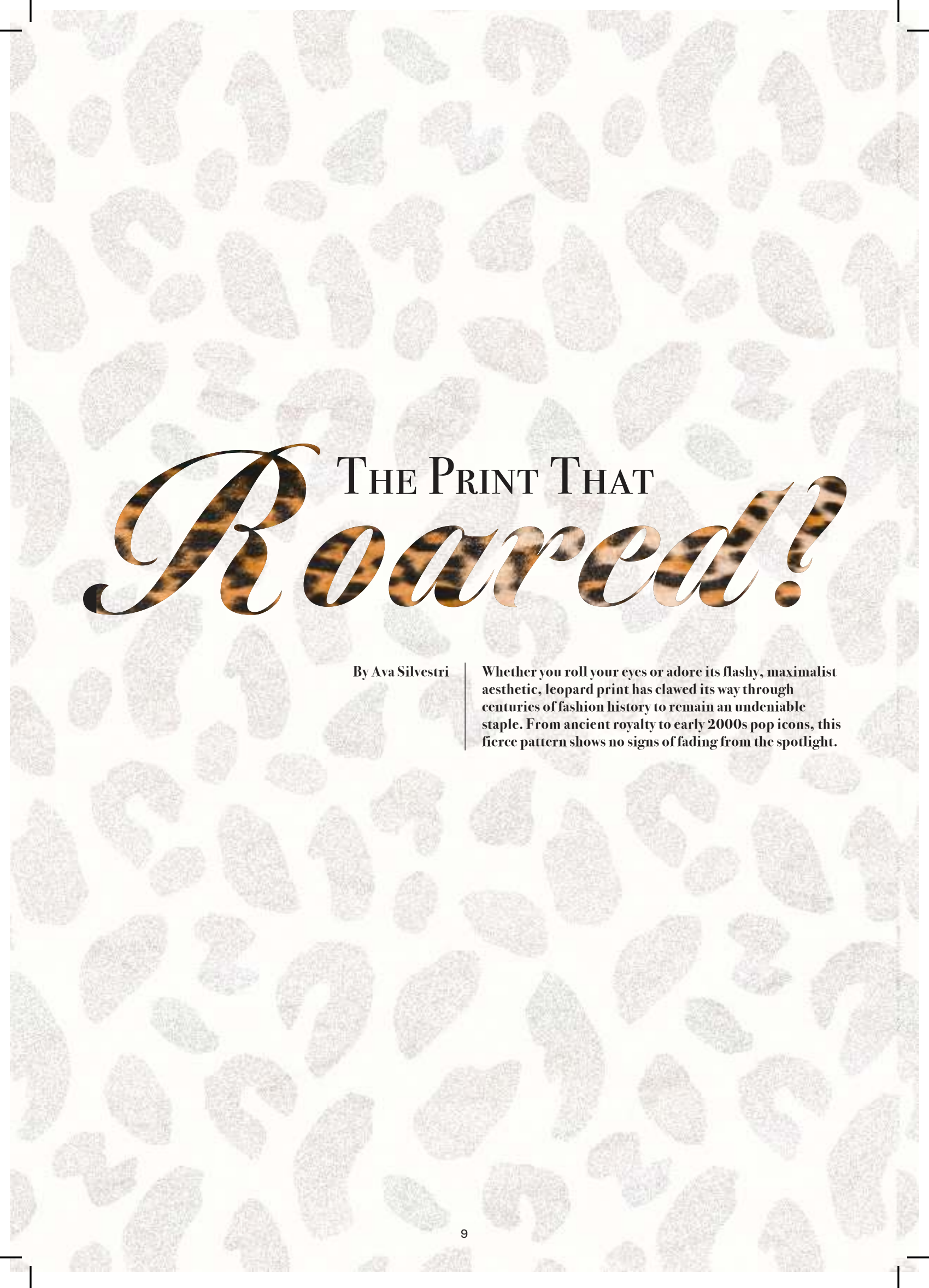
- blokes movement
- "u must be mad!": studying as a single parent in the 90s
- let your blood run free
- stick your finger in (masturbate: it's good for you)
- wimmen who ride
- outworkers
- give a chick a blowtorch (thoughts of a women enduring mechanical engineering)
- the many, many incredible poems, poetry, reviews and art pieces that fill the remainder of the pages.

I have two final light-hearted notes on this marvel of student history:

- Xena Warrior Princess is deemed to be the "*matron saint of all frustrated women's handbook editors*", and is interested to have a chat about the Pill
- The back cover is what we would now call a wonderfully "*deep fried*" image of a woman with the text "*masturbate*" below. Perfection.

One can only hope that our modern spaces of student feminism (such as the **Women's Space** and **UOW Women's Collective**) can reach such a level of badassery once again ... If you're interested in collaborating with like minded women, non-binary folk and uterus-havers be sure to follow us on Facebook (**UOW Women's Space** public page, **UOW Women's Collective** private group), Insta (@uowwoco) and come check out the space! We're now located in Building 11, room 214. We've got pads, tampons, snacks, and a passion for feminism <3

In solidarity,
Lexi Chipperfield
WUSA Women's Representative



THE PRINT THAT *Roared!*

By Ava Silvestri

Whether you roll your eyes or adore its flashy, maximalist aesthetic, leopard print has clawed its way through centuries of fashion history to remain an undeniable staple. From ancient royalty to early 2000s pop icons, this fierce pattern shows no signs of fading from the spotlight.

A Print With Power

Long before it was splashed across miniskirts, bags, shoes and, crop tops, leopard print was a symbol of strength and status. Warriors, pharaohs, and rulers from Africa, Asia, and Indigenous American communities donned real leopard pelts as a mark of power (Lawton, 2024). Even the Roman elite flaunted animal prints to

showcase their wealth and influence (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, n.d.). By the 18th and 19th centuries, real leopard fur became a luxury item in Europe, worn by royals and aristocrats. As colonial explorers brought exotic skins back home, demand for these wild prints skyrocketed, setting the stage for its Hollywood takeover.

*MGM,
1954*





Ritts, 1991



© MEGA

Mega, 2020



*Ramirez,
1996*

Hollywood Glam and Rock 'N' Roll Rebellion

Leopard print got its first major fashion moment in the golden age of Hollywood. Stars like Jean Harlow, Marilyn Monroe, and Elizabeth Taylor draped themselves in its sultry, glamorous allure. Then came Christian Dior, who, in 1947, transformed leopard print from an exotic statement to a haute couture must-have (de la Croix, 2023). Fast forward to the '60s and '70s,

and leopard print became the uniform of unapologetic confidence. Eartha Kitt, Edie Sedgwick, and punk rockers like Debbie Harry (The Guardian, 2015) and The Rolling Stones took it from classy to rebellious, proving that leopard spots belonged everywhere, from red carpets to underground music scenes.

From Revenge to Y2k Chaos

With the bold maximalism of the '80s, designers like Gianni Versace and Azzedine Alaïa made leopard print synonymous with over the top glamour. Supermodels like Naomi Campbell strutted in head-to-toe leopard, and brands like Dolce & Gabbana cemented its place in high fashion. Then came the early 2000s. If you were a teen or young adult during this era, you probably had something leopard print, whether it was a fuzzy tank top, a mini skirt, or a questionable bedding choice. Pop culture queens like Britney Spears, Paris Hilton, and the entire cast of Cheetah Girls made it a Y2K essential, forever linking it with the era's fun, flashy aesthetic.

Classy or Tacky?

The Great Leopard Print Debate

Leopard print has a love-it-or-hate-it reputation. Styled poorly, it can give a tacky, early-2000s reality TV vibe, but when done right, it's effortlessly chic. High end designers like Dior, Saint Laurent, and Dolce & Gabbana have proven that leopard print can be sophisticated. The secret? Moderation. A sleek leopard print dress, a statement coat, or a subtle accessory paired with neutral colors will always look timeless. But layering bold patterns or going full head-to-toe leopard? You're stepping into risky territory. No matter how trends change, leopard print always finds its way back. It's a print that adapts to every era, proving that sometimes, a little bit of wildness never goes out of style. So, what's your take? Timelessly chic or forever tacky? Either way, leopard print isn't going anywhere, so embrace your inner wild side—but style it wisely!

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*The Perversion
of the
Madonna*

by Miss Eddie

One of the things about coming from a Christian background is that I do still maintain a degree of shame about sexual things. It came from a lack of acceptance and understanding of bodies, sex, and intimacy. This is something that has been a massive struggle for me with the communities that I am involved with these days. Not because I judge people for what they do, but because I want to be able to feel that level of comfort and security within myself. To experience that intimacy.

There is a beauty in being able to freely give and accept forms of intimacy without the expectation of it going further or any pressure to take it all the way. I feel like there is the potential for us to move past this idea of all or nothing: that we must either be purely non-sexual or completely sexual with others. The idea of being able to be intimate or loving towards my close friends and have partners who I can have various connections with is a beautiful concept. I feel like as human beings we are meant to have this sort of connection with people, but the expectations of sexuality have created this closed-off view.

The perception is that sex should only happen in these particular circumstances and only with these particular people. It closes us off to a variety of experiences that can bring pleasure and, while it may seem hedonistic, there is also an intimacy of a shared

connection. With the number of divides that we have within our society that fuel hatred and fear, we should be seeking connections with other people. Not all of them must be intimate, but why do we have to limit romance and sex, or even just intimate touches, to a constructed view of heterosexual, monogamous, intimate relationships? Why does it have to be all or nothing? When we start to embrace and accept that there are more ways of approaching intimacy, we can start to explore our own needs and desires without shame.

However, humiliation and shame can play a great part in a person's sexual journey. Through my experiences of exploring the BDSM world, I have discovered the concept of sexual humiliation. What I find so interesting about this concept is that the shame you feel about your sexual desires can fuel the desire even more. It is like somebody has perverted the idea of the Madonna-Whore complex. With sexual humiliation you maintain the aura of the pure Madonna with the embracing of the whore, which comes from this force of enjoying the humiliation of your sexual desire. When the person acknowledges that they experience desire from the humiliation, they are embracing this combination of the Madonna and the whore. In fact, the Madonna is integral to this experience. You cannot feel the degree of humiliation that creates the sexual desire

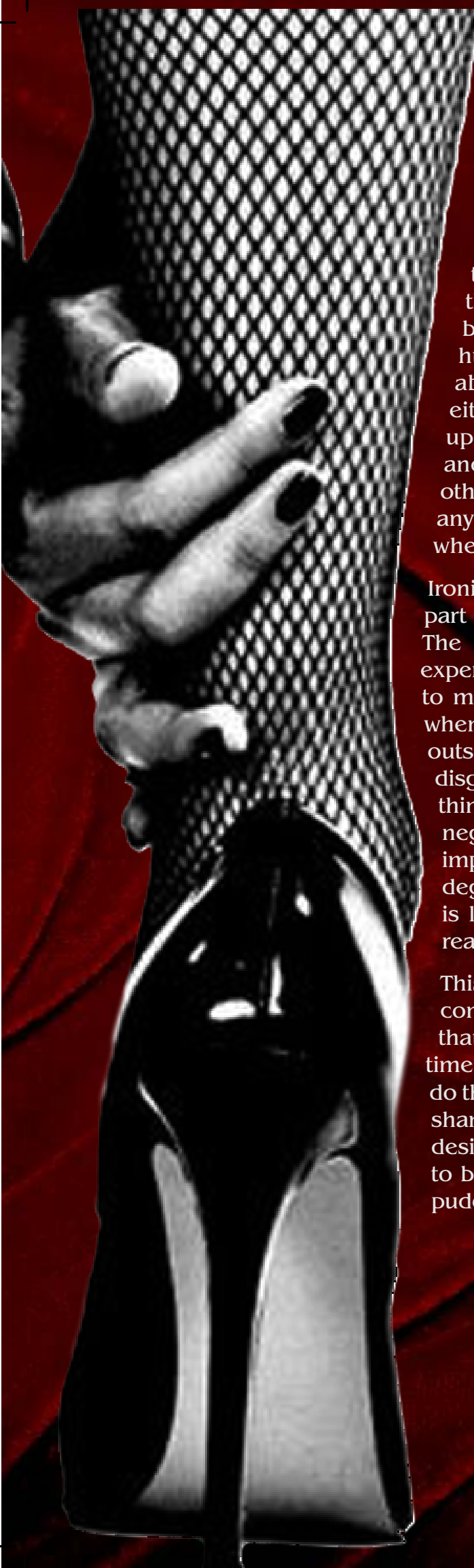
in this form of play without having that sense of shame around your sexual desire.

There are degrees to this form of play that should be acknowledged, as it is a spectrum that needs to be negotiated. It can take the form of a lighter style of embarrassment, all the way down to heavy forms of degradation. The shared element, though, is the fact that the person on the receiving end feels some sort of sexual arousal from the style of humiliation. It is important to also recognise that humiliation does not need to take the form of a sexual act, that is, the person giving the humiliation does not need to focus their actions or comments on the receiver's sexual arousal. As an example, a person could be made to feel embarrassed about what they're wearing and experience sexual arousal from that humiliation, but the focus of the person humiliating them is not on the sexual arousal that the person receiving experiences. Usually, the receiver's sexual arousal does play a part, as the giver would likely recognise that they are receiving pleasure from the act of humiliation. This then feeds into the situation by making them feel more humiliated about liking and being aroused by what is being done to them, creating a beautiful endless loop.

That is what I am most interested in. The idea of a person being humiliated by their own sexual arousal – humiliation which in turn feeds their arousal more. This is also what I perceive to be related to the Madonna-Whore complex. To be humiliated about your sexual arousal requires you to feel a degree of shame or embarrassment about it. Where this stems from is that you think you should not be aroused by something and because you are, you feel embarrassed about it. If the thing is your sexual arousal itself, it is coming from the idea of the Madonna – the woman who is pure and shouldn't be related to sexual acts.

The creation of this style of sexual humiliation comes in the form of making the person feel embarrassed about having that sexual arousal in the first place, thus feeding the arousal experienced from the humiliation about said sexual arousal. Which is where the whore enters. The Madonna sets up the person's ability to feel embarrassed about their sexual arousal and then the whore feeds off that humiliation. This makes a nice easy loop for the person giving, as all they need to do is continue to comment on the person's sexual arousal thus humiliating them further while also increasing their arousal and creating this perversion of the Madonna-Whore concept. It becomes this embrace of an experience where you're denying





neither the Madonna nor the whore as they feed each other. The more you press on the feelings of shame for breaking the illusion of being pure, the more the whore enjoys the experience.

To play devil's advocate, and fully explain this concept, I do have to consider what would happen to the idea if the person felt no shame around their sexuality and fully embraced the idea of being a whore. It becomes simple: how can you be humiliated by something that you feel no shame about? There's nothing wrong or shameful with that either. The full embrace of being a whore opens you up to experiencing a range of pleasurable sensations and knowing what your body is capable of. On the other end of the spectrum, there really shouldn't be any shame in choosing purity either. The issue comes in when a person is ashamed of being both.

Ironic, since I'm making the claim that shame is an integral part of the sexual humiliation play that I find fascinating. The difference though is the shame that someone experiences in this space is not a bad thing. The aim is not to make them feel bad about their sexual arousal, even when it may seem as though that's the case. From the outside, watching a Mistress tell a submissive that they're disgusting for being aroused by licking her boot, you'd think it would be a bad thing. But this is why consent, negotiation, and a deep understanding of oneself are so important. That submissive knows that they enjoy that degree of verbal degradation and is consenting. If there is lingering shame from the experience, aftercare, and reassurance of their worth will be utilised.

This style of play can only really be reached in a safe and conducive manner if the person has been able to accept that the Madonna and the whore can exist at the same time without diminishing their worth. When a person can do that, they can experience an intense enjoyment of their shame, perverting it in a way that ends up fueling their desire even more. All in all, it is a rather remarkable way to break someone's brain and turn them into a babbling puddle on the floor.

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1. Uma caixa fechada, com um
 e um fecho de uma parte,
 - está fechada por fora,
 e não pode ser aberta
 e não pode ser fechada
 - é uma caixa, e não um fecho.

A Whore No More

by Miss Eddie

Trigger Warnings: Knives, erotic humiliation/degradation, explicit content, BDSM power exchange dynamic.

A/N: Initially this short story was not written with the concept of the Madonna-whore complex in mind. However, the main character's humiliation with expressing their sexual desire is perverted into something that causes them to experience a more intense sexual experience. Which made me think about perceptions of sexuality and purity. That lead to realising this character is a perversion of the idea that a pure woman should be ashamed to have sexual experiences. In a way, they're a blend of the Madonna and the whore; the good girl who feels ashamed to experience these feelings and the whore who loves to feel the shame because it fuels the desire.

I wanted it. I really wanted it, but verbalising it, putting it into words, letting my desire be known, that was the part I really struggled with. Especially since you weren't going to make it any easier on me.

With your back to me you continued to stare at the screen, cursor blinking next to a line of written words. The chair was ergonomic, practical, an office chair on wheels. Back high enough that I could just see the top of your brown curls. I may not have been able to see directly into your eyes, but I saw the vague outline of your face as a reflection. I felt like I was meeting those primal eyes on that screen, seeing the expectation in the waiting cursor. I felt your amusement in the tension that hung in the air and the playful impatience of the rolling tap of fingertips on the desk.

All I could think about were those fingers – the way they'd feel touching me, stroking warm spots on my body, pinching sensitive spots. I needed those palms gripping my thighs, slapping soft flesh and turning it red. I needed them. My own hands were never quite good enough and if I didn't move soon, that's all I would be left with.

Still, I shook; unable to move forward to what I was so greedy for. When we'd first been faced with this situation, I'd thought it had been my shame holding me back. Something that I needed to move past and fix. Then you toyed with it. Played with my humiliation and showed me that it could be something I didn't have to hide from. Allowing you to use it to increase the tension, showed me how we could use it. Suddenly my inability to ask straight away became a toy, where we were both sure

what I wanted, but we just drew out the game. The hesitation and nerves suddenly weren't from anxiety, but from an overload of excitement. We both thrived on the way it created an anticipation of what was to come next, of what would finally tumble out of my mouth, but the craving of that moment just felt too good. It was what kept us playing this little game. Except, we both knew that there was a moment that the tension got too much for me ... and you played bored.

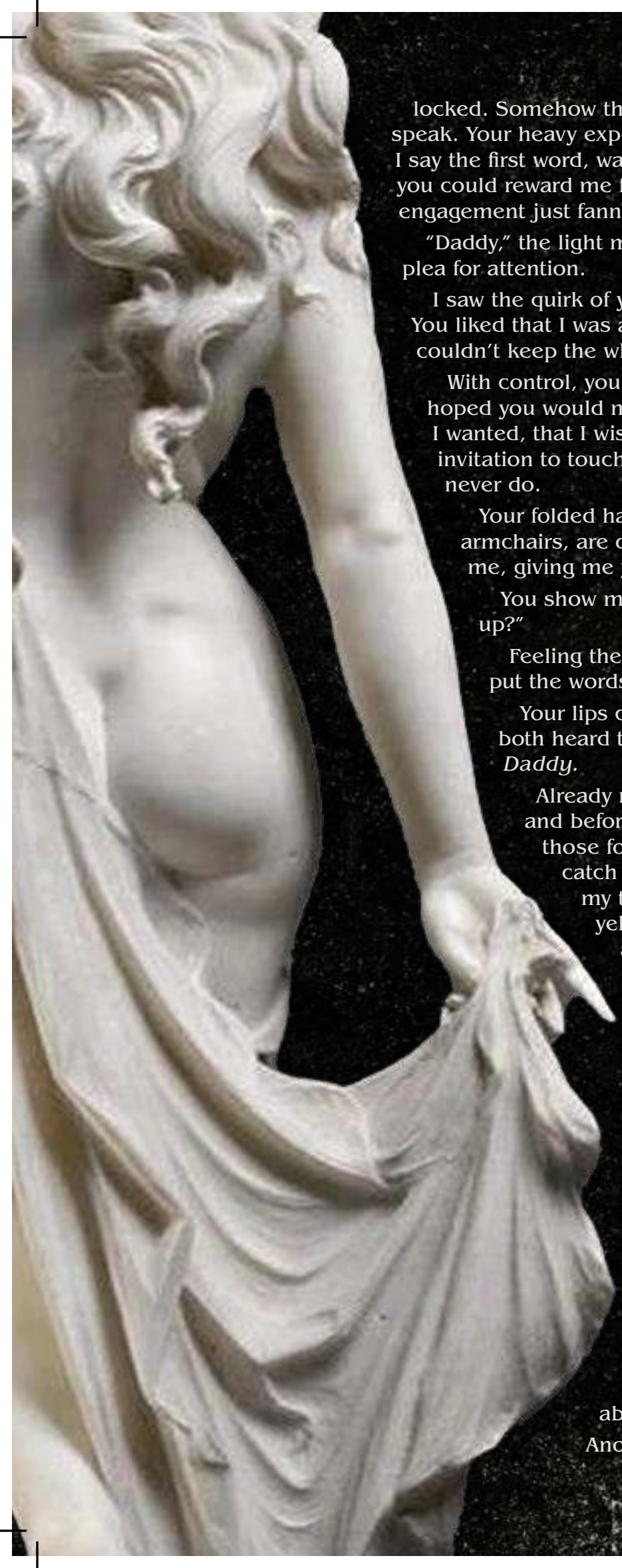
Clicking filled the room, and I sucked in a breath. Your eyes were on moving words, conscious of me, but now ignoring my hesitation. The tension wasn't exciting anymore and I felt the anxiety shoot through me making me feel heated and breathless.

Every game comes with some sort of risk. For us, it was simply about never fulfilling that anticipation. I had a choice, I could leave and you would never follow up. It was the natural consequence; if I didn't ask for what I needed, then I wouldn't have the opportunity to receive it. That was the risk of not voicing your needs. Knowing that I was on the precipice of losing what I wanted, I pushed past my nerves and ignored the blood rushing through my ears. Instead I listened to the sound my feet made as they compressed the fibres of the carpet, closing the distance between the two of us.

Pausing by your side, I still felt mute. The game had already shifted, but somehow I was still testing this portion. Seeing how long you'd let me draw this out, if you'd let me continue to sit in this nervousness that made me feel warm or if you'd relieve me of the burden of having to start that tumble into an inevitable overload that would make my brain shut down. It was a fine balance to get to that spot where I still had the capacity to speak, but where my speech started to turn into stammering, indicating that nonsensical babbling would follow.

You had such a talent to give me the space to let my brain stop trying to control every tiny word that came out. I needed to answer you, I needed to tell you things, to say the things I wanted, but something inside me just kept my lips





locked. Somehow this game, these moments, let me speak. Your heavy expectation that I make the first move, that I say the first word, was your way of giving me a struggle that you could reward me for. Your dominance lit the desire, your engagement just fanned it higher.

"Daddy," the light murmur may have been slightly whiny, a plea for attention.

I saw the quirk of your lip that dropped just as quickly. You liked that I was already so desperate for you that I couldn't keep the whine from my voice.

With control, you turned the chair to me. I always hoped you would make it easier. You already knew what I wanted, that I wished you'd take my one word as an invitation to touch me and draw me in close. Except you never do.

Your folded hands, with elbows resting on the armchairs, are deliberate. Your entire body is facing me, giving me your attention, but not your hands.

You show me a tiny bit of mercy, saying, "What's up?"

Feeling the nerves drop into frustration, I finally put the words into the air, "I'm horny."

Your lips curled in, teeth catching them, and we both heard the dad joke drop ... *hi, horny. I'm Daddy.*

Already rolling my eyes, I crossed my arms and before I could bring out any more attitude, those folded hands broke so quickly I didn't catch your action until I felt the pressure on my thigh. Fingers dug into my skin, and I yelped, arms dropping as quickly as the attitude.

"I'm sorry, I'm sorry," the words rushed out from panic that I'd just ruined my chances to get what I wanted.

Your other hand grabbed my t-shirt and pulled me forward to stand between your legs. A sharp slap to my chest eased the panic, and I felt grateful that you could do so much with so little words.

"You're horny," you repeated, drawing my attention back to the situation.

I nodded, bringing my thumb to my lips to nibble at it.

"And, you want me to do something about it."

Another nod.

"I could do anything I like ... make it go away with pain."

The whimper was closer to a whine. I didn't want that, and you knew it.

"Or, you could tell me what you want."

That was hard. I just wanted you to know. I just wanted you to do what you wanted, but I also wanted specific things. The pull between wanting you to just do and wanting you to do things I wanted.

A sharp pain hit my chest as your fingers squeezed the sensitive nipple.

"Touch me," I yelped, "finger me, please. I just need ... I need ..."

The pain eased, causing me to stammer and lose my words. My brain was already filling up with too many thoughts and emotions. I needed that edge to bring the words to my lips, but as soon as they were out, I heard them. Face flushed, I lost my words again.

"Is that all you need right now?" You asked.

Again, I wanted to roll my eyes. Mostly, yes. Physically, all I really wanted in that moment was your fingers inside me, but I wanted you to do your thing. The thing where you wound me so tight with making me wait and keeping me from the end I desperately craved. I wanted your control. You could take so much more at that point. You could do whatever you wanted, and I would've happily taken it, knowing the intense pleasure and mindlessness would feel so good.

Which was exactly why you were demanding me to tell you what I *actually* wanted. You enjoyed knowing what I like and wanted, even if you didn't give it to me.

A deep breath.

"I want you to play with me. I want to cum, but I don't want it easy."

Your laugh was warm, "You never want it easy."

"I can do easy," I grumbled, "it's just boring when I can make myself cum in a few minutes."

The grin you gave me was full of triumph. You had what you wanted now. You had my admittance to needing your control. You

had my submission.

"I like your way of doing things," I reached out, toying with your collar. The action was both coy and flirty, my bratty way of sucking up to you.

"Kiss ass," you teased.

Grabbing the hem of my skirt you lifted it to my lips, and I automatically opened my mouth to grip the fabric between my teeth. You hesitated then, concern lit your eyes as you touched my hips. It wasn't your usual possession, but a tenderness of protection.

"You okay with that?" Your chin jerked up to my skirt and I knew you were checking that past traumas weren't surfacing.

I smiled behind the fabric and nodded. This was you, I knew I was safe here. The brief break to check, filled me with a softness that was different to the heat from before. A caring that balanced the primal burn.

That grip tightened on my hips as the game started again. Your frown wasn't real. I knew that, but I still felt the anxiety that came with it. My hands came up to grip the skirt as the feeling of being tiny in front of you hit.

"You should know better by now than to come to me with panties on. Especially when you want me to touch you."

I groaned as you traced a single finger across what I'd kept hidden from you.

"I could be cruel right now. Send you away without permission to touch yourself ... or I could be just a bit mean, let you touch yourself, but do nothing to help you."

I couldn't do anything to plead my case with the fabric muffling the groans and whines. Your touch was already drawing from me.

"Or, I could show you mercy," you mused as you turned away to your desk.

I watched as your hand reached over to a silver letter opener that sat on your desk. Leaning back in your chair you balanced the tip against a finger.

"I wonder if this is sharp enough. Let's find out."

You moved so fast; I couldn't process whether my guesses about what you were

going to do were right until you had a side of my panties pulled taut with the edge of the letter opener pressing against it. I felt yanked by the motion as a small rip started. It took force, but you managed to tear the offending fabric from my body. I probably would've protested if I wasn't gagged by my own skirt.

"Much better," you crooned as you started your slow exploration of my body.

I could feel that loss of brain function that felt like a hit from a drug. My eyes rolled back as your hands squeezed my thighs and slid upwards, brushing lightly through the inside of my hips. So close to my centre. I'm sure you could feel the heat near your fingers.

I struggled with the frustration of wanting you to take your time and wanting to demand that you hurry up. Somehow, you found the perfect middle ground as you took one finger and ran it straight up through that heat. I wanted you to do it again and again, but more.

The pad of your finger returned and pressed on that bud of nerves. Rolling in a way that made me feel a sense of pain from it being too much. A keening noise broke through my teeth, a begging to stop, but also give me more.

You said something, but I didn't hear it. The touch stopped, but didn't leave.

With some effort, I looked down at you and listened.

"Tell me what a dirty little creature you are."

Heat flushed my cheeks as indignation shamed me, even as I felt the dampness between my thighs. I loved to hate this part. The humiliation of admitting the position I was in. The sheer embarrassment of knowing that my own horniness had gotten me here.

"I'm a dirty little creature," the words were muffled by the skirt, but even despite that, you knew I didn't say them loud enough.

A sharp smack preceded a dull ache in my chest.

"Louder," you demanded.

"I'm a dirty little creature!"

"You're my dirty little creature," you grinned, dipping a finger inside me.

My heart was already racing from the way you made me feel embarrassed and hot at the same time. I panted and groaned as you pumped a single finger in and out. It was slow and measured. Controlled to give me just enough, while building me higher.

I could already feel my brain falling apart, the mixture of sheer pleasure with anxiety and fear made my body crumble. I could feel the tears building at the edge of my eyes. You'd barely touched me and I was already feeling too much.

One hand stayed on my thigh, grounding me, as you added another finger, building the pace. My head rolled forward as I felt my eyes get heavy. Watching, I saw your face come close to my bare arm where your lips closed over skin and teeth dug into flesh.

I yelped into the fabric in my mouth as I felt myself tense down on your fingers. It wasn't quite the rolling waves of an orgasm, but it was the warning signs of what would happen if you kept up this pace.

Staring into your eyes, I pleaded. The wicked intensity of your unblinking stare spoke about how much you were enjoying this more than any words.

"Are you going to cum?"

"Uh huh," I nodded.

"No, you're not."

Everything stopped and I held back the urge to scream.

Keeping your fingers deep inside me, you began to slap my thighs with the open palm of your other hand, punctuating each word with the sharp pain.

"I. Control. Your. Pleasure."

I barely managed to keep myself from tipping over the edge and I know you saw that, because you took the opportunity to fuck with my senses and roughly take up a fast rhythm. It pushed me fast and hard over the edge and I dropped the skirt from my lips as I screamed. You didn't stop though; you pushed me through and into another. Using one arm you held me up as you kept going, even as I jerked. My hands grabbed onto your arms as your teeth

latched onto my shoulder, biting down through the clothing. Claiming me in a deeply primal way.

When you finally pulled your fingers away from me, I felt all the movement in my body fall to the ground as you grabbed me and pulled me into your lap. Your hands turned soft and endearing as you stroked my hair and body. The words you whispered into my temple were sweet and praising.

A deep sigh of pleasure came as the feeling of a smile graced my lips. I allowed myself to sink into a different sort of pleasure, as I accepted your care and drifted away in our own little world.

Hypocrite

By Laura Trebley

Illustration by Ella Jade Lobwein

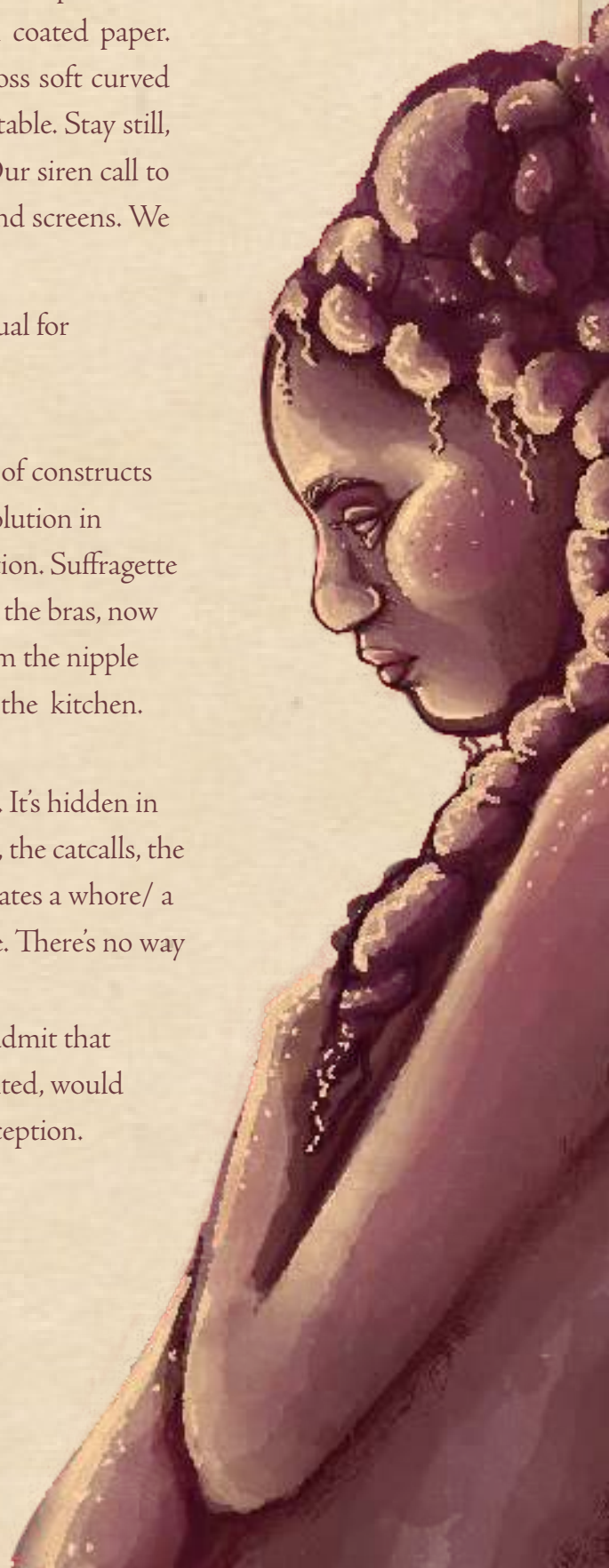
Nude and focused in oil paintings. Naked bodies draped and sculptured in marble. I won't deny that she's beautiful, pornographic ink on coated paper. Exposed close up on the high resolution screen. Slowly pan across soft curved thighs, hips, shoulders and neck. Skip her face. This is uncomfortable. Stay still, we want to look at you. You're the muse, the grand inspiration. Our siren call to action. Pause on the shoulders in the paintings, statues, papers and screens. We have to look.

Always covered in breath (life). Cover up. Any part exposed is equal for punishment. It's your fault.

Born into the body of a hypocrite. Caught in the crossfire of constructs crafted to keep you at heel to the powerful. I learnt about the revolution in history class, black and white photos in the PowerPoint presentation. Suffragette and Sixties together, you convinced us the world moved on. Burn the bras, now put it back on, quick, before he notices the curve in your shirt from the nipple underneath. The revolution was short lived, they want us back in the kitchen.

You'll be told you're being sensitive, but look at the details. It's hidden in the small errors. The comments, the music, the shows, in the feed, the catcalls, the 'dark humour' and 'locker room talk.' 'No' creates a prude. 'Yes' creates a whore/ a slut/ a hoe/ a slag/ a bitch/ a tease/ a bimbo/ a floozy/ a pick me. There's no way out, the knots stay tied.

I've never been catcalled before and I'd be lying if I didn't admit that sometimes I wish I had. A warped wish for validation that if granted, would make me want to escape my own skin, to disappear into non-perception. Boys tell you they catcall because they think you're pretty. Am I not pretty? It's all I need to be.



Am I not pretty? Am I not pretty? Am I not pretty?
Maybe I shouldn't want to be, not for you.

Pretend the blatant hypocrisy isn't real. Forget about the knots you've been tied into. I'll forgive you, but I notice. It's the anxiety woven through my ribcage when I walk past a group of noisy teenage boys. The feeling of fingernails jammed into my palms during the seconds it takes a car to drive past with windows rolled down and heads stuck out. The heavy breathing and tight calf muscles from walking home as quick as a bunny. Don't follow me please. The tension at the base of my skull from constantly looking behind, watching for the bogeyman. I'll always notice. The fear sets in. Every day the news reports a form of violence against a woman. Some are beaten, some are threatened, some are abused. Most are killed. Don't tell me it's not real, I've seen the headlines. I know the statistics. You turned our bodies into pornography and then punish us for it in the name of your own purity culture. I didn't consent to this.

Aren't you tired? I'm tired of watching myself in third person, a constant internal voyeur. Examining how close to perfection I am in each second of the day. Tired of fighting for basic respect. No, I won't debate you, this is the home of my soul. Tired of constantly asking 'why isn't it enough to just be myself?' and knowing the answer. I will never be enough, I'm a woman.

I'm mostly tired of being told I'm overreacting/ being dramatic/ being too sensitive/ too emotional. We are your muses, your inspiration. The siren call to action. The solvent to the leak of incel culture. We're the diet solution for red pill content. The hypocrisy you crave to fall in love with.

I'm keenly aware that I've presented an issue and offered no solution. I'm scared to admit I don't have one. I'm scared of becoming another statistic, another headline and name in the background noise of all the other names. I'm afraid of resenting my own body like I did at fourteen. I'm afraid of judging too quickly and hurting someone and of judging too slow and hurting myself. I'm worried I'll blame myself for my own victimisation. I think in all of this, I want to know if you, reader, are just as angry and scared as I am. If I'm not alone in being worried or wary. And if you are, we can worry together. I'll hold your hand and you'll hold mine and, in that moment, we will be a little less afraid.



Fuck(ing in) Sydney

By Korina Protopsaltis

Mind Your Own

Content Warning: this story contains homophobia, and homophobic language.

He spent most of the day explaining why he wasn't going.

'The parade? Nah, not my scene,' he'd say. 'Quiet night in for me.'

By midday, his ambivalence towards the affair was being tested. He didn't usually feel like this while the sun was still out, although sometimes he'd lie in bed cursing the co-worker who'd seen him walking down Sussex Street holding another man's hand. Then, he'd curse her again for getting the promotion. Then, he'd curse himself for destroying the man's phone number, which had been ripped in half three times and thrown into the recycling bin he kept in the corner of his bedroom.

At 2:30, another group stopped by his desk to ask what his plans were. Unlike everyone else, they were inviting him out. Inviting him to spend the evening sitting in Hyde Park drinking Tempranillo while the parade went by. Maybe it would be nice, he thought. Not *company*, but company.

*Primo tentativo fatto in Italia del 19
fornitura a chiama in Capital Bule*

Around knock-off time, when the last of his ambivalence had curdled into something beyond recognition, his boss poked his head over the cubicle.

‘Bunnies are playing tonight, you wanna go?’ the boss asked, with a shit-eating grin. ‘Ah wait, you’re probably...’

‘Probably what?’ he said. ‘On Oxford street with the *other* faggots? Spare me.’

*Primo tentativo fatto in Italia del 19
fornitura a chiama in Capital Bule*

By the time the sun was setting, he was watching television on his couch. When it was clear Brisbane weren’t any match for the Rabbitohs attack, he switched over to the ABC, where they were broadcasting the parade for the first time. He watched as a bald man wearing a dress and holding a novelty handbag waltzed alongside a ute. The bloke driving the ute looked ... normal, and after a moment the man in the dress leaned down to kiss him. By the time the couple of TV’s lips had parted, the man had run from his settee into the bedroom, wondering if he couldn’t somehow piece the number together.



The Australian Financial Review,

14 September 2024

As the train speeds past Burwood station, I realise I'd happily fuck everyone else in the carriage if I could. A man is sitting across the aisle. He's reading *The Fin*, and beads of sweat are resting on his salt and pepper comb-over. Maybe I'll leave you here to scroll, and I'll let him take me into the tiny train bathroom. Some people would love that, but I know you'll hate it, and once we're done I can follow him back to his seat and I'll rest my head against his shoulder.

Mercy Me

I've come to know this feeling too well. It washes over you almost as soon as you finish. If you're unlucky enough to finish first, you've gotta lie there and wait. The third time I fucked another man I finished first, and just before he came he pulled me in and kissed me. His breath tasted like a mix of Nescafé and Marlboro Ice-Blasts, but when he was done he whispered my name and gently shuddered, and that seemed to be enough to break me. I pulled my jeans up around my waist and stumbled out of his apartment, waiting until I heard the door close behind me to break out into tears. Two nights later I was back in his arms. He's gone now, though. I think he moved down to Canberra for work. He was the one who took me out in Darlinghurst. He explained the difference between twink and bears, between tops and bottoms. He introduced me to poppers. According to him, I was a bottom. 'You lot always are,' he'd say. 'I've never seen a top beg for absolution.' I often wonder what would have happened if he'd stuck around. Would I have come to accept it? Maybe, we'd have ended up dating. Maybe, I'd have introduced him to my parents. We could legally get married now. We could have settled down and adopted a dog. Maybe, even a child.

