

miniMAG

issue154
bad dumb sub man



DEEN



A Toenail Thing

Nate Mancuso

“SORRY, I KNOW I’M NEW AT THIS, BUT ISN’T THAT CANNIBALISM?” I ask Carol through the mouth opening on my black latex bondage hood as I turn my head around to look up at her. Before she can answer, I add, “And if it is cannibalism, how does that fall into any of the BDSM categories?”

I’m lying on my stomach on a crumpled bed in a cheap dingy Motel 6 suite while Carol sits comfortably on the back of my bare upper thighs with her bent legs firmly straddling my naked torso. She wears shiny black thigh-high faux leather boots attached by garter straps to a black vinyl halter top corset dress laced tightly across her abdomen. In her right hand, she grips the shaft of a braided black leather flogger, now rested at her side after our light warm-up session, while holding silver metal nail clippers in her left hand. After I turn my head around, she extends her left hand to place the nail clippers just a few inches from my face.

I can tell that my question has angered Carol, who glares down at me through the small eye openings of her half face mask. “Do you even know what BDSM stands for, you submissive little bitch?” she asks me

harshly while raising her right hand and flicking her wrist back so that the leather tails of her flogger fly back behind its neck.

“Yes,” I reply eagerly. I’m exhilarated and energized by the threat of another flogging. “I googled ‘BDSM’ last week before I registered on the website; it’s an acronym for bondage, discipline, sadism and masochism.” My heart rate picks up in excitement and anticipation watching Carol brandish her flogger.

“You forgot domination and submission, you fucking imbecile,” Carol barks at me while cocking her right arm and readying the flogger for another downward attack.

I acknowledge her with a quick nod and reply, “I understand, but domination and submission are redundant of other letters already in the BDSM acronym so they’re basically included under the existing D and S letters for discipline and sadism. It’s just cleaner that way.”

Carol rolls her eyes at me with an exasperated smirk while lowering the flogger to her side. “OK, Wordsworth, so which of those BDSM letters are you?”

After thinking a moment, I reply, “Well, like I said, I’m new to this so I’m trying to figure out which BDSM subgenre suits me best through a trial and error process,” then add, “But under any plausible definition of the BDSM categories, I really don’t think that cannibalism qualifies.”

Carol purses her shiny black glossed lips, then nods in agreement. “OK,” she responds hesitantly, “But it isn’t really cannibalism per se if I just want you to eat my toenails and not any of my actual body parts.”

I flash Carol an empathetic smile, then try my best to ease her obvious discomfort while not sounding patronizing. “Well,” I explain patiently, “I never took an anatomy class but I do think that toenails are considered a body part. I mean, think about it, they may not have nerve endings or independent sensitivity but they couldn’t exist without a human to attach to – right?”

Carol nods coolly, reluctantly acknowledging my sound logic. “OK, but going back to the BDSM categories, if the point is to inflict pain on me when you remove my toenails, then I think it’s either sadism or masochism even if the eating part is technically cannibalism.”

I nod and ask as diplomatically as possible, “Well, if you want me to inflict pain on you, then why are you handing me nail clippers? Aren’t those supposed to clip your nails *painlessly* instead of just ripping them off your toes – thereby inflicting pain? I don’t mean to be difficult, Carol, but it just seems like me using nail clippers is antithetical to the whole BDSM routine.” I pause briefly then add, “And also, if you’re the ‘dom’ and I’m the ‘sub’ in this scenario, then aren’t *you* the one supposed to be inflicting pain and not *me*?”

Carol looks down at me silently. Her large brown eyes—so fierce and confident just moments ago—now look sad and doleful like a lost puppy.

Unable to restrain myself after sensing Carol’s vulnerability (and smelling weakness), I pounce like a jungle predator: “Carol, I don’t mean to be rude—and I’m sorry to be so forward—*but have you ever done this before?*”

Carol blushes deeply and turns her head to avert her eyes from mine.

I feel Carol squirm uneasily atop me, and I sense her embarrassment like a sharp pang in my own gut. I feel horrible knowing that I’ve humiliated and disrespected Carol so flagrantly in her “dom” role. I can tell that I’ve violated some cardinal rule of BDSM etiquette. Maybe this isn’t my game after all.

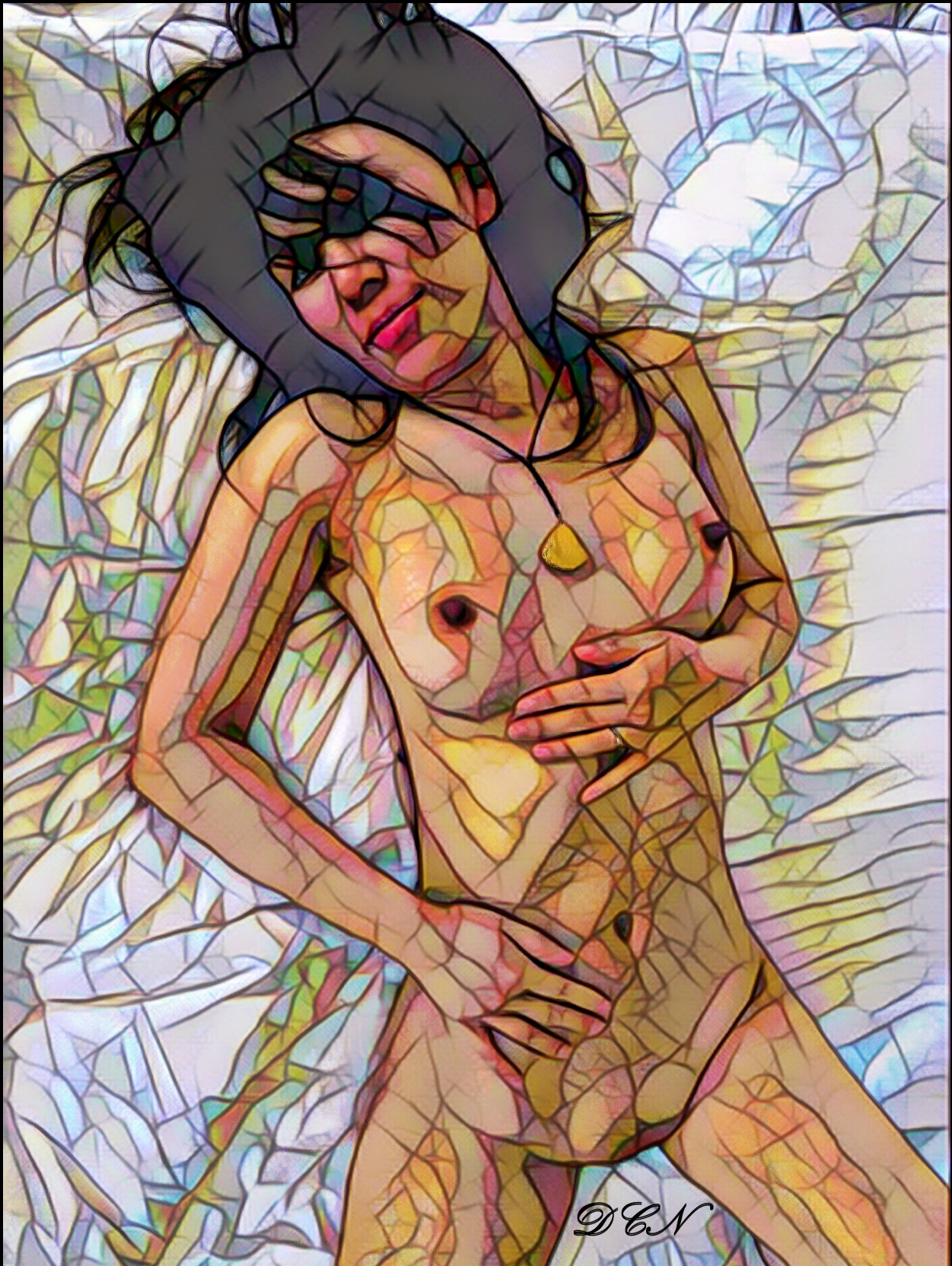
Thinking quickly, I do my best to backtrack and rehabilitate myself with Carol. “I’m so sorry, Carol, I don’t mean to be a prick, I’m just new at this—it’s literally my first date since I joined the BDSM website—so I’m still not really sure how it works. If you’re still feeling your way along here too, that’s totally cool—we’re both taking this journey together, like exploring a new city that we’ve never visited before.”

Carol relaxes and I can feel the tension drain from her body. She pulls her face mask off and looks at me with a shy grin. “Actually, yeah, I am new to this. It’s only my third BDSM date. The first guy made me to slap him with a hog crop then peg him with this silicone strap-on that he brought to the hotel in his backpack, and the second guy cut his ankle on his spreader bar then yelled at me and left the hotel.”

She sighs deeply and continues, “But they both felt so *sure* about what they wanted that I didn’t feel comfortable asking them to do my toenail thing,” then adds, “But with you I just felt so much more relaxed and

confident, like I could ask you for *anything* and you wouldn't judge me."

Tears begin to well up in Carol's eyes. She ungrips her leather flogger, which falls lightly onto the bedspread, then raises her right hand to her



face and wipes the budding tears from her eyes before they can cascade down her flushed cheeks.

I turn over on the bed then pull off my bondage hood and lay it beside me on the bedspread so that Carol and I are facing each other. I reach my right hand to her face and stroke the back of my fingers gently against her cheek. "I get it, Carol, I really do—and I'm sorry to make you feel so self-conscious and uncomfortable—that really wasn't my intent."

Carol lowers her face and gazes down at my bare chest while nodding slowly. She reaches her hands out to remove the hard rubber clamps that she'd fastened to my nipples during our warm-up session. I feel a warm tear drop from her face to my chest and watch it trickle down over my side, gaining speed as it passes over my rib cage then onto the bedspread. "Most guys I meet aren't into my toenail thing, so that's why I joined the BDSM site. I just thought maybe I'd meet someone who's more open to it."

I take a deep breath, then say, "I thought we really hit it off at dinner—we both love sushi thai and had so much to talk about with our careers and goals and hobbies and everything—but the whole BDSM part of this date is kind of going off the rails and not how I expected." I add, "Honestly, I don't even know *what* to expect, this being my first time and all, but I don't want this to ruin our first date. I really do like you and I hope that you like me. Maybe we can just hit the rewind button and start this part over?"

Carol nods her head vigorously in agreement while wiping her eyes again. She looks relieved and refreshed. "I feel the same way, I really like you and don't want to screw this up over my toenail thing."

I smile up at her, pleased with myself for reviving her spirits.

Carol raises her eyebrows then asks with renewed vigor, "Wanna get outta here and go back to my condo to watch a movie?"

"Sounds awesome," I reply with a reassuring grin, "Any specific movie in mind?"

"Of course," Carol replies with a suggestive smile, "*Edward Scissorhands*... I really like his knives."

A few hours later, we're back in Carol's condo after stopping on the way home for frozen yogurt. We're nestled together on her living room sofa, watching the final scene of *Edward Scissorhands*, which Carol is thoroughly enjoying. She opens her legs then turns toward me and begins to grind her crotch against my knee.

"I love this part," Carol whispers into my ear as she begins to grind harder, "The way that Edward uses his scissors to save Winona Ryder is so fucking hot."

"Right!" I agree enthusiastically.

The movie ends after Edward stabs and kills that nerd kid from *Breakfast Club* (and *Sixteen Candles* and *Weird Science*), then Carol purrs into my ear while the credits roll as she continues to grind my knee, “So wanna play Edward Scissorhands?”

“Sounds great,” I reply. Though I’m not quite sure what this game entails, I don’t want to be a buzzkill after our date was barely rescued earlier at the Motel 6. Everything is going well now, but I know that can change on a dime with Carol.

Carol beams at me then jumps up from the sofa. “Cool!” she exclaims, then adds, “Just stay here while I go put on my dominatrix outfit and get my scissors!”

“Carol, that’s OK,” I say before she runs off to her bedroom. “You don’t have to change your clothes into—,”

But before I can finish my sentence, Carol pivots and strikes me with a hard open-handed slap across my face, which immediately stings while my face burns hot. “I’m the one giving the orders, you fucking slave! Now you’ll sit there, keep your goddamn mouth shut and wait for me!”

I curl up into a fetal position on the sofa and nod to her dutifully with my best sad-eyed Edward Scissorhands look, reminding myself to maintain my submissive role in this exciting new game.

A few minutes later, Carol exits her bedroom dressed in a tight full-body black vinyl catwoman suit wearing a new face mask with feline ears protruding from the sides. She struts on black stiletto heels into the kitchen and opens a drawer beneath the marble countertop next to the refrigerator. She looks and then rifles furiously through the drawer with both hands. After about a minute of searching through all her kitchen drawers, she pounds her fist against the countertop and bellows out, “Goddamnnit! I can’t find my scissors. I must’ve taken them to work and left them there!”

Carol enters the living room, looks at me sternly with the nail clippers, now held in her right hand, then points them at me. “I guess these’ll just have to do. Now sit up and take your shirt off!” she commands me.

“Wait a minute, I’m confused,” I say and then ask, “Aren’t I supposed to be Edward? And even if you’re Edward, he never used nail clippers.”

Carol nods silently to herself, walks back to the kitchen then quickly returns holding a large carving knife in her right hand with the nail clippers in her left.

“A *kitchen* knife?” I ask, barely able to conceal my surprise.

Carol clearly is frustrated and looks at me for a moment before responding. “It’s a knife, why does it matter what it’s supposed to be used for?” Her voice quivers when she shouts out her next command, “Now just shut the fuck up and strip!”

Despite my best effort, I’m unable to subdue the laughter that escapes my throat. “But Carol,” I explain in between laughs, “There are special *BDSM* knives and daggers. Nobody uses kitchen knives. I thought you wanted to just poke around, not carve me up like a pot roast!”

Once again, I push the limit and let my mouth get the best of me. “And you still have the nail clippers! Carol, is this whole Edward Scissorhands game just a ploy to get me to eat your toenails again?”

Carol’s face reddens like an electric stovetop while she screams something unintelligible then flings her knife and nail clippers across the room at the wall. She drops to the floor with her hands pressed to her face, then turns on her side and begins to weep uncontrollably on the floor in front of the sofa.

I immediately hop up and help lift her onto the sofa, where she lies down then hugs her knees and curls into a ball. She rocks back and forth in this fetal position while her weeping intensifies.

I wrap my arms around Carol’s shoulders and feel her shaking like a poodle while her violent sobs continue. I try to calm her down with quiet soothing shhh whispers.

After a minute or two, Carol’s sobbing slows down and she looks up at me with tear-stained cheeks. “I’m sorry. I’m just so fucking bad at this. I’ve never used a knife on anyone before, but watching Edward just gave me the idea and got me in the mood.”

“It’s OK, it’s OK,” I whisper softly into her ear while gently caressing her hair.

Carol’s sobs subside while I massage her arms and shoulders to loosen her tension. After a few moments, she looks up at me in embarrassment and says, “Sorry I’m such a mess tonight. I’m trying too hard to fit into this dominatrix role and it’s just not happening for me.”

I smile back at her while giving her upper arm a gentle squeeze. “Tell you what, why don’t we shelve the whole BDSM routine for tonight and take a bottle of wine out to the balcony? It’s a beautiful night.” I nod my head toward the balcony with a wink.

Carol sits up on the sofa to look out the sliding glass door to the balcony, then turns back to me with a smile. “Sounds perfect,” she says quietly with a sniffle. She stands up from the sofa and walks to the kitchen where she pulls a bottle of wine from the refrigerator and takes two wine glasses from a wood cabinet above the countertop. She walks over to the balcony door, looks over at me with a grin and nods her head toward the balcony. “C’mon, let’s go outside.”

I walk over to Carol and take the wine bottle from her right hand. She uses her free hand to open the sliding glass door to the balcony while holding the glasses in her left. We walk through the door then sit on cushioned chairs on either side of a small patio table where Carol sets down the wine glasses and pours us each a half glass.

I raise my wine glass and nod to Carol to do the same. I look out over the balcony rail to the starry black night sky and close my eyes for a short moment. I reopen my eyes and look to Carol with a soft smile. I extend my glass toward hers and toast, “Here’s to our first date, and to your toenail thing.”

Carol giggles as we clink glasses and says, “To our first date... and the *end* of my toenail thing.”

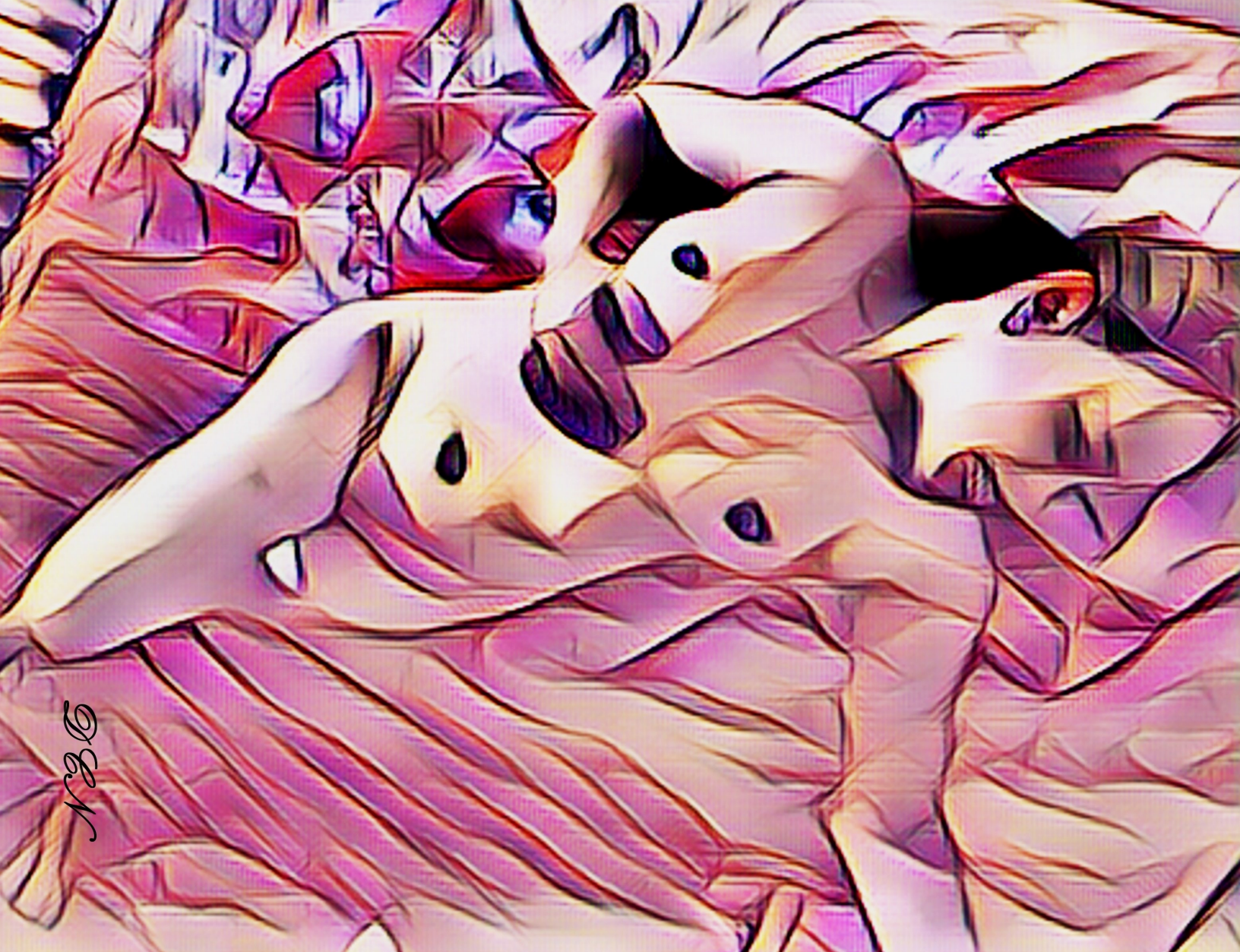
We both turn our heads to look out past the balcony and sip from our wine glasses. I move my hand across the patio table and place it atop hers on the armrest of her chair. We sit quietly and enjoy the comfortable silence while absorbing the beautiful night.

My heartbeat slows down and I close my eyes. I feel perfectly calm and at ease. I open my eyes when I feel Carol’s soft warm lips gently kiss my cheek. I look over at her with a smile.

Carol leans up in her chair and moves the patio table forward then pulls her chair directly next to mine. She rests her head against my shoulder. “I’m so glad I met you,” she says as she raises her soft eyes to me.

I squeeze her hand as we drink our wine and gaze out into the dark serene night sky.

Neither of us speak a word.



name like dorothy

airport

it was your exuberance during the three-way
that made me realize how much I love you,
and just how far from Kansas I've gotten.
I've been pacing around my one-bedroom
thinking of excuses to text you before the allotted time
interval
has passed.

I've been pacing around
I've been pacing around
you bring on mania. I bring on chuckles:
you said "don't make me love you" that's not up to me
you said "don't make me love you" with a botoxed wink

this blue-bricked road we're on scares me
this is us doing a burnout in a parking lot
throttle and thrill and going nowhere
this is us in bed for 2 full days
it's sex and lust and bloodshot succubus eyes
I go third person to watch
as you take command of the orgy
I'm in awe. I'm in too deep. I tap my crystal heels together.

"don't make me love you" sure

when I tap my heels I'm not wishing for home; I'm wishing for innocence.
I'm wishing for a black and white photo. One of a girl on the beach getting a
ticket from a police officer for wearing a bikini. The slut. I want to be
scandalized by a bit of ankle. I'm hoping to develop a fetish for exposed
shoulders. Or the upper back. Or something similarly old-timey, loose
bonnets and all that.

“don't make me love you” ok

I long for innocence as I choke on you
and you grab my head
and I gag back tears

“don't make me love you” I won't

The thing is
the flying monkeys don't bite much
and the witch,
she has her moments, too.



DBN

Matriculating

Reza Jabrani

Perky collegiate racks wobble tittily down the sidewalk. My diploma reads: washed-up, washed-out, approaching middle-age. A mortarboard perched unceremoniously on my bald head. How many more credits till I'm dead?

A shout-out to my favourite ghosts

Paul Ransom

It happens to all of us. People leave. Emails bounce. Calls do not get returned. Today, we call this ghosting. Yet, it is nothing new. Relationships, however close and seemingly unbreakable, have always existed on the edge of ending.

The inspiration for this piece arrived on New Year's Eve, when I found myself pondering the passage of time, sifting through a late night flutter of recollection. Triggered by the arbitrary numeration of calendars, I found myself thinking of former friends and flames, especially those who had abruptly severed contact. And of their reasons, some of which remain a mystery.

Although I can speculate, and possibly concoct reasonable theories, why would I bother? Because, ultimately, I do not *need* to know. They made their choices, which they were perfectly entitled to do, and I am not *owed* an explanation. Closure is not mandatory.

Still, I think of them on occasions, like New Year's, and wonder where they are. *How* they are. And I feel the tiny scars they left behind. Of which there are several, some incidental, others deeper. Three that stand out. Ridges of separation on the skin of memory.

Ghost # 1: The girl from 1982

She landed in my school and, thereafter, in my heart. Not like the others. Smarter, darker. A fallen angel for my saviour fantasy. I used to escort her to a seedy gaming arcade in the city, where she would disappear with older men for twenty/thirty minutes, then re-emerge... smudged. I think of this sometimes and fall to pieces.

Naïve, and blinded by ego and desire, I was merely jealous, and all I did was ride the train back home with her to enjoy the falling crumbs of her bruised, intoxicated affection. She kissed me once or twice. Not deeply, but enough.

I told myself I was her protector. How abjectly I failed in this regard.

Then, one day during the school holidays, I knocked on her door and her grandma told me she had left town. I must have asked for details, but I do not remember if any were offered. (Was I told she went back to Germany? Or am I imagining it?) Nowadays, I cannot even recall the last time we met.

Ghost # 2: The old school friend

As a teenager, he was a core part of our social group. We shared a love of Python and electronica. Later, as young adults, we drew closer. Together, we explored our emerging passions for red wine, Leonard Cohen, and arthouse cinema. Even though he worked high up the corporate ladder and my wife and I were semi-employed writers and wait-staff, there was no status riff between us.

But young adults became thirty-somethings, and he and his partner moved to London, whilst my marriage dissolved. Luckily, there was email. We kept up a steady stream of exchange until, one day in the southern summer of 2006, there was an 'address not recognised'.

I tried multiple times to re-establish the link but to no avail. In later years, I Googled him, searched him on Facebook. Nothing. Mutual friends have likewise drawn blanks. Recalling that he had health issues, I cannot even be confident he is alive.

Ghost # 3: The former student

Teacher/student relationships are often fraught. Asymmetries of power, age gaps, etcetera. So many crossable lines. Yet, somehow, we avoided these pitfalls, and quickly became friends. Music, movies, food and more bonded us. There were also deeper confidences. She told me her secrets, and I shared mine.

Over a span of nearly twenty years, we cooked, cried, went to shows, and formed a deep and trusting connection. She was my first Facebook friend. Even the subsequent distances imposed by interstate moves and differing social and work circles did not erode our friendship.

Yet, something must have. We had made a loose arrangement to meet for coffee—no dates or times—but circumstances caused a delay and when I followed up a few weeks later she did not respond. Since then I have made a number of approaches. Sporadic texts, emails, social media messages, phone calls. I left three or four voice messages, spread out over a couple of years, hoping that something might prompt a re-connection. My final message was recorded in June 2023.

The gap between intimacy and mystery can be wrenching. It can fill with poison. Bitterness, blame, shame. Endless, unanswerable questions.

Or it can be beautiful. A gift of enigma. A reminder that nothing is guaranteed, and that our understanding is flawed and partial.

It is also a call to compassion. We may never truly know the other, but we *can* be sure they are changeable, and that they, like us, are liable to wake up one day and simply move on.

- I have done this myself; suddenly fallen out of love, stopped being attracted, lost motivation to invest in friendships or projects. I too have ceased responding. There is at least one woman I know who must have wondered what she did to deserve so cold a shoulder.

My message to the trio above, and to the other ghosts, is that your silence is okay.

If ever I made a claim on you, I apologise. Likewise, if I bruised or offended you, or acted in a manner that felt like betrayal, I am sorry.

Yet, please know that I am not dwelling, either in loss or self-mortification. Your absence is not a weight. Rather, it is a light. Your departure has carved a space for acceptance.

I thank you for your presence in my life and, now, for the manner of your leaving. So often, our explanations—rationalisations—are a reduction. Perhaps we seek them as exoneration or diversion, or as a life raft. A way to stop wondering. However, not knowing, and therefore unburdened by the imperfect memory of incomplete illustration, I am free to let you go without caveat... the beauty of which, like your quiet evaporation, is indescribable.





MYSEXYME

Theodore Wallbanger

The majority of uncivilized mouth breathers will fail in efforts to filter disdain. Hiroshima clouds of ridicule coupled with fiery judgment can and will transcend landscapes. Owner/Operators must sign 97 binding high-risk, confidential documents that will change destinies.

There will be moments when internal questions arise which fire up death soldiers starting the first self-destruct sequencers soldered into all MYSEXYME pleasure companions.

Pickahole, Unlimited, relies on all believers bonding with their MYSEXYME hologram sequencer training technician who aligns paid-in-full customers with manipulation hotkeys specific for their unique sexual rodeo clowns made from synthetic tears. Reverse annihilation codes are available for purchase from the hologram technician.

When freethinkers dance in alluring galaxies there will be risks.

If hesitancy erects its wicked prick head with any MYSEXYME robotic fun pack human union, the second self-destruct sequencer

engages, overriding the first self-destruct mechanism with the addition of flickering lights and annoying “whacka whacka” audible which screams on a rampage trajectory.

Pickahole vets all cash customers before pairing which ensures ideal Kama Sutra possibilities including redundant programming of all personal owner intel encompassing tastes, desires, memories, and shared visions capable of being enabled with proper blink commands.

In a world of limits, Pickahole has engineered admission to fire bang utopia silencing the negatives while flexing the possibilities. MYSEXYME is the designer smash fun partner qualified candidates can Frankenstein together with all the amazing power smile talents that tickle their taint.

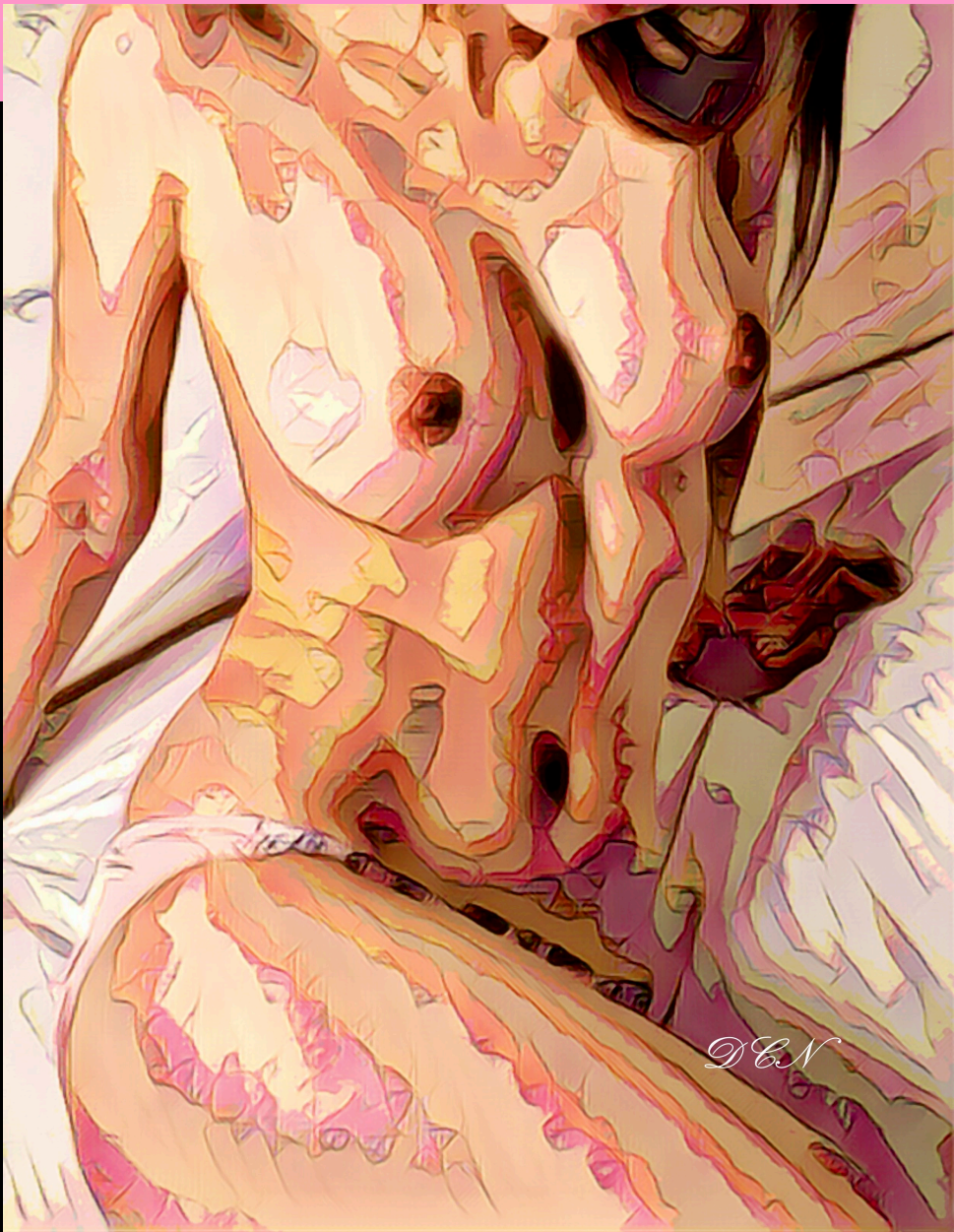
Embracing vanity assists those on ascension to decadent pleasure chambers. Pickahole mirrors wants and dreams with customization. When flesh becomes tedious or routine, MYSEXYME will always be a remote jiggle away hibernating in one of thirty-nine sleep vessels available for acquisition in the merch shop.

There have been mutterings surrounding future marriages being recognized between MYSEXYME creations and humans. This hope-filled unicorn has not garnered waves of support from the underbelly of the living.

MYSEXYME currently offers two options for the male or female sexes. The options are indoor or outdoor. Outdoor variants splinter cell from here with on-road or off-road featurettes as choices.

Hologram synthetic immersion casts present with a liquified hypnotic effect. MYSEXYMEs are not just for primal scream cream dances. Opera, business ventures, vacation or just busting’ smiles at home, MYSEXYME is your magic self.

Pickahole challenges you to buy enchantment. Own yourself with a MYSEXYME and never waste another frown pleasing anyone but yourself.



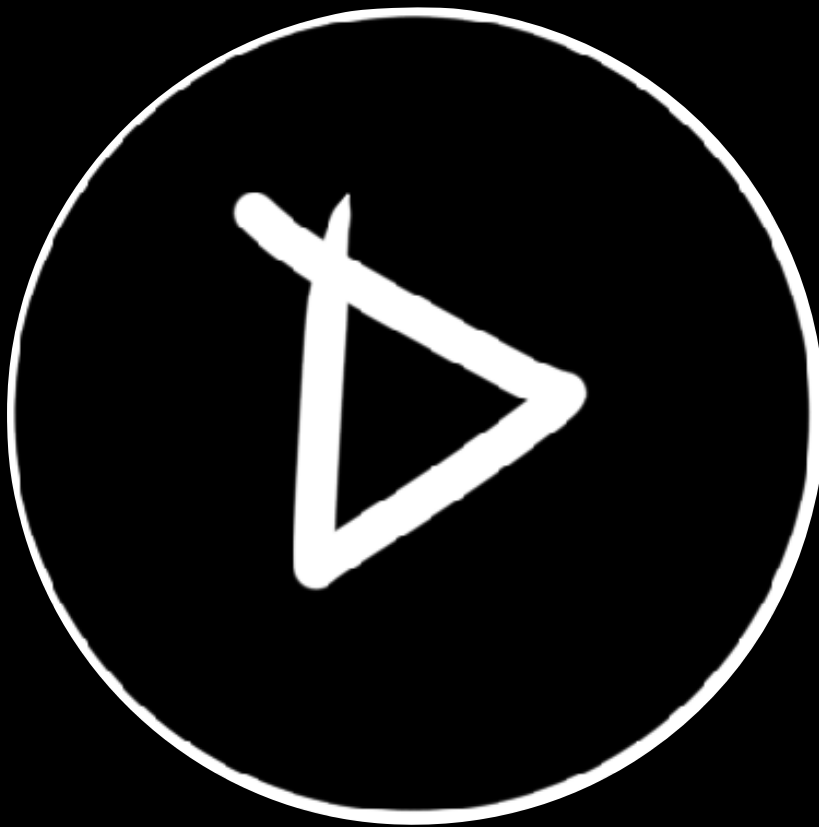
Inter Alia

Damon Hubbs

saying yes to sex parties is so '68.
we masturbate the street to seize the beach
whatever happened to modernism
the recuperation of genitalia, farce and tragedy / inter alia.
You love the types of Robert Granjon lettercut with weeping.
Our last embrace in Hendaye

is water, always water
a spontaneous overflow of scythes and sickles.
We live quickly
because there's design in everything.
It's true the sun looks ill without its ringlets.
I read The Aspern Papers at Hôtel Valencia

and steal death from an aging poet,
eat an orange from a fruit bowl quivering in late period light.
The next morning
on the beach, children bang
with toy rebellion, inter alia / my euros are missing.
Adjusting the kerning helps my anatomy sing.



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Page 02: Shanghai Pink Pastel Nude
Page 05: Ciqikou Pastel Mosaic Nude
Page 10: Pink Pastel Nude #2
Page 12: Shanghai Nude #1
Page 16: Nude from Back #2
Page 17: Pink Pastel Navel Jewel Nude #2
Page 19: Pink Pastel Posed Nude
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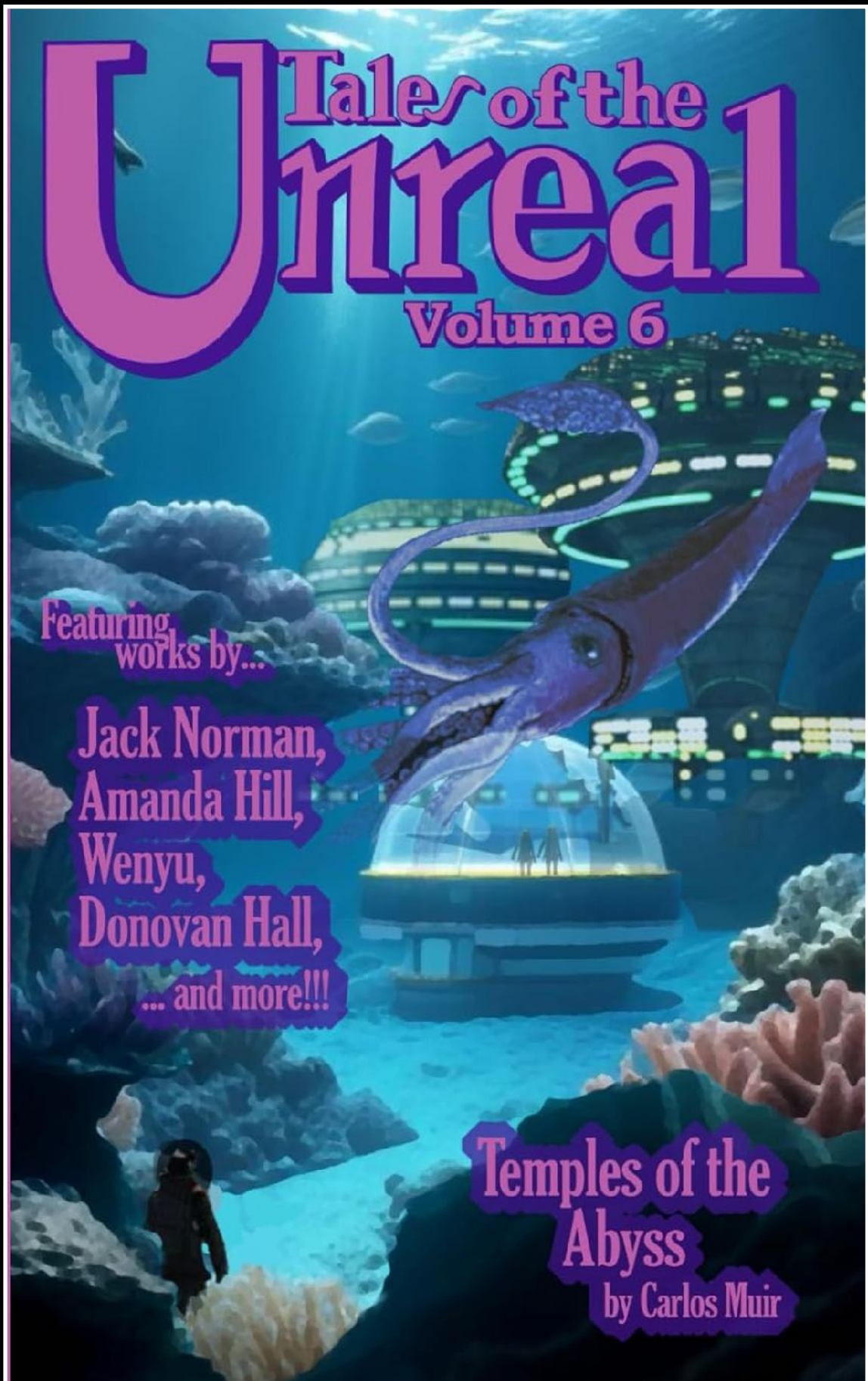
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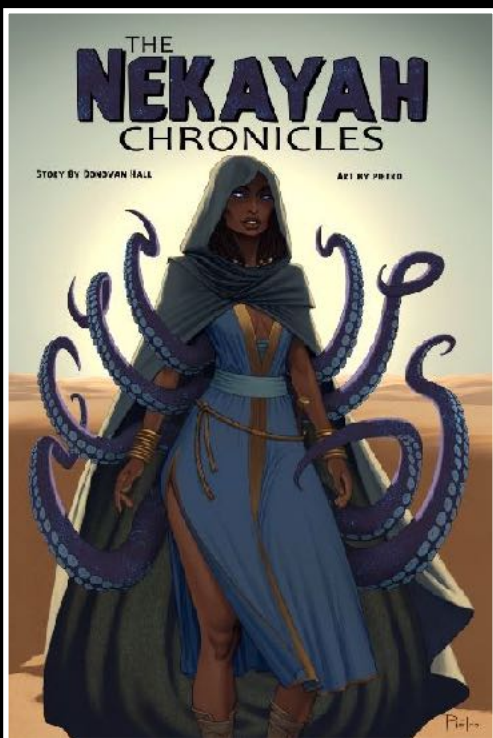
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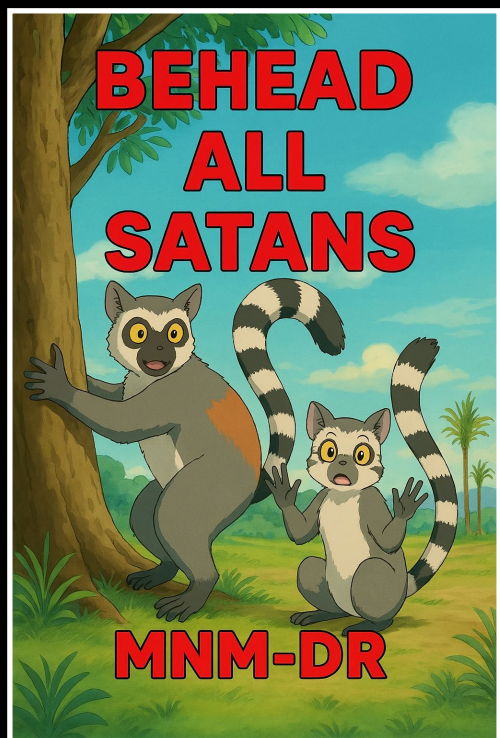
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