

GDFC MAG



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EDITOR'S NOTE



EMMA MAGNUS
@EMMAFMAGNUS

Football is finally on the cusp of returning. At long last we will feel the ball at our feet again; hear the shouts of our teammates; diligently submit ourselves to the tutelage of our coaches.

Not long into lockdown, I completed Coach Josh's Player Profiles exercise over the phone. "What would you consider to be your strengths on the pitch?" Coach Josh asked. I paused. "My brute physical strength" I replied. "And your weaknesses?" My harsh internal master, eager to criticize, spoke enthusiastically of my weaknesses. "I am under-confident running with the ball and I have poor aerial control", I told Coach Josh. "Yes", he agreed. "Let's put: work on aerial duels."

It was the perfect time to have completed Coach Josh's skills matrix. Lockdown was prime time for introspection. What kind of football player did I want to be? Now was the time to decide.

My new appetite for self-reflection soon transcended the pitch. It quickly became my main hobby. I slowly digested each kernel of information from the TV I watched (the Wire for the third time) and the things I read. I contemplated my life frankly and I considered carefully what was important to me. I scolded myself: cursed fool, you have walked through the past years of your life with your eyes closed. If only you had held up the magnifying glass sooner!

I am glad to see that I am not alone in this. In this issue, Beth Miles describes the protest between her pre and post-COVID selves. Likewise, Rachel Burns' tarot readings anticipate the desire for change, lending sage advice.

Whilst in the habit of self-examination, Black Lives Matter gained momentum. I noticed ugly qualities in myself and in the world – qualities I had not noticed before. I became aware that, despite smugly describing myself as 'inquisitive', 'rigorous' and 'an analytical thinker' on my CV, I had never truly recognised or acknowledged the structural racism around me; never questioned how the schools we went to and the roads we live on are named after slave owners; had no idea that until 2015, our taxes were still being used to compensate British slave owners for the abolition of slavery.

Self-reflection is good, but it is a job half done. Now is the time to bring down our own statues –the outdated monuments we have made for ourselves– and to erect new ones in their place. As our pre-COVID lives are poised to return, what's important is what comes next.

With that, welcome to Issue 2 of GDFC Mag. Linked by the theme of protest, these pieces wrangle collectively about the future. Georgia Iacovou writes fascinatingly on BLM and the tech world; Georgia Bruce brings the abolitionist project to light; Liv Amos outlines the effects of the pandemic on professional football; Maggie Hayes and Fleur Cousens write on the significance of Pride. And this is but a taster. You're in for a treat.

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MAG TEAM



EDITOR IN CHIEF
EMMA MAGNUS @EMMAFMAGNUS

Emma established GDFC Mag and is the publication's editor. She commissioned and curated content for the magazine as well as having contributed to it herself. Emma has worked in theatre for over 5 years and is an agent for international stage rights. She writes in her spare time and is the author of the Ventrilocrisp. She joined GDFC in 2015.



CREATIVE DIRECTOR
ANASTASIA KUCHTA @ANASTASIAKUCHTA

Anastasia is responsible for the design and layout of the magazine. She also worked to commission illustrations, as well as illustrating parts of the magazine herself. Anastasia works as a Graphic Designer, and has a MA in Magazine Publishing from University of the Arts London.

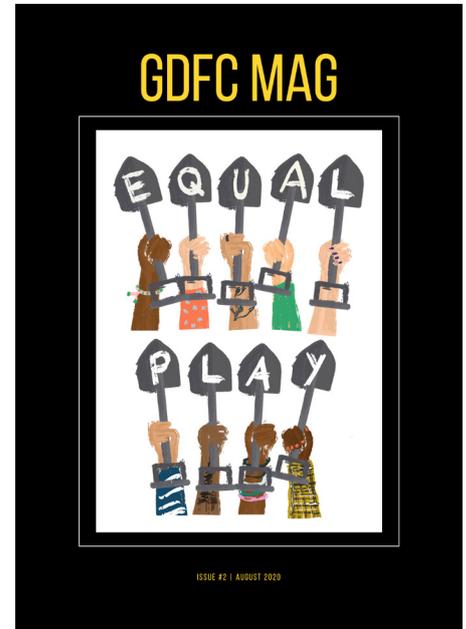


CONTENT DIRECTOR
CIARA ROBINSON @CIARA_SHAY

Ciara helped commission, curate and write content for the magazine. She works as a social/psychological researcher in the criminal justice system having completed an MSc in Urbanisation, Complex Emergencies and International Development. Ciara used to chair political debates at youth conferences across the EU and previously helped run events at the School of Life. Fresh faced and eager to become the next Rapinoe, she joined GDFC in 2019.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY GABY PIMENTEL @PIMALIM92

ABOUT THE COVER



Ella Lambio illustrated the cover, which features the iconic digger and the words equal play. The idea of equality, no matter how simple it may seem, has always been seen as radical. Equal Play therefore is a form of protest—a challenge to the status quo that only benefits few.

With the unrest happening in all parts of the world, I took the collective anger, yearning, and eagerness for change and tried to translate it in an artwork that can directly say that “we are here, we have the right to occupy space, we have the voice and you will listen to what we have to say.”

The dirt has been dug out and now is the time to break new grounds.

WILL GOAL DIGGERS FC BE PARTICIPATING IN PRIDE 2020?

WORDS BY FLEUR COUSENS @FLEURCOUSENS, PHOTO BY KATE MCSHANE @KATELOUISEMCSHANE

Pride 2020 might be cancelled, but Goal Diggers —with a majority of members from the LGBTQ+ community—will still be participating. However, we will be doing so in a way that is in keeping with its history and origins. Pride started with a riot led by Marsha P Johnson, Stormé DeLarverie and many queer and trans people of colour. We will be raising money for UK Black Pride with an online edition of our queer club night Murder On Zidane’s Floor (MOZF) and also running an Instagram series celebrating our amazing queer members.

In my experience, football and Pride have an uneasy relationship. On the one hand, Goal Diggers’ inclusive spirit has made football the space where I feel most comfortable. However, since coming out, I’ve found it increasingly hard to attend men’s games. The very presence of such loud and aggressive homophobic language makes me feel like my queerness isn’t tolerated in these spaces. Whilst amazing LGBTQ+ footballing groups and people such as Anita Asante, Hope Powell, The Flying Bats and Dyke Soccer, give me hope, it feels like the professional men’s game has a lot of catching up to do.

The Pride Parade itself also has a lot of catching up to do. In 2017, GDFC marched in the London Pride Parade. Whilst it was empowering to represent the queer, womxn’s football community the parade felt empty - a conveyor belt of corporate, capitalist gains. We never marched again.

The next year, I attended Brighton Pride. My main memory was the oppressive presence of British Airways, who allow people being deported from the UK to be carried on its flights. These deportees include those facing persecution because of their sexuality. British Airways were not only present; they were the main sponsors of the parade. Their very presence made the space feel unsafe. Until no-one risks deportation and death for their sexuality our society cannot even begin to be proud.

IN MY EXPERIENCE, FOOTBALL AND PRIDE HAVE AN UNEASY RELATIONSHIP. ON THE ONE HAND, GOAL DIGGERS’ INCLUSIVE SPIRIT HAS MADE FOOTBALL THE SPACE WHERE I FEEL MOST COMFORTABLE. HOWEVER, SINCE COMING OUT, I’VE FOUND IT INCREASINGLY HARD TO ATTEND MEN’S GAMES.

Another memory from Brighton Pride 2018: the Paddy Power bus. The side of the bus read: “Official Bus Of Gay Professional Footballers”. There were speakers blaring out music on the open-top deck yet the bus was eerily empty. The empty bus was intended to highlight the absence of any openly gay footballers in the Premier League. “Come Out And Play” was plastered on the corner of the bus.

I was furious. For many reasons. Firstly the bus seemed to suggest that the players in the Premier League were to blame for not being able to “come out and play”. There seemed to be absolutely no connection with the systemic and structural issues within football that result in it being extremely hard for Premier League footballers to be openly gay. Secondly, coming out is a very personal decision. A decision that Paddy Power has no right to be involved in. Thirdly - “Official Bus Of Gay Professional Footballers”. What is missing here? The word male. There are professional female footballers who are openly gay. It was clear however that in the eyes of Paddy Power there was only one type of professional footballer: a man. Thanks Paddy.

Goal Diggers will always take part in Pride, but in a Pride that focuses on how far we still need to go, not how far we’ve come.



GDFC TOP TRUMPS

WORDS BY CIARA ROBINSON @CIARA_SHAY, ILLUSTRATIONS BY LILY GRANT @LILYROSEGRANT_ART

THE GDFC MAG TEAM INTRODUCES TOP TRUMPS: A BLAST FROM THE PAST WITH A POLITICALLY DISASTROUS NAME. EACH ISSUE, WE WILL INCLUDE A SERIES OF CARDS DETAILING YOUR UNIQUE SELLING POINTS AS PLAYERS AND PEOPLE.

As the collection grows, we encourage you to put together your squads and battle it out for the best starting 11 (on or off the pitch). For the inaugural batch, we introduce to you our new committee members. A fine starter pack to your collection. Get psyched for the maddest collectibles around town. Want to end up on one of these fine cards? Email mag@goaldiggersfootballclub.com for the chance to be featured in the next issue.



STRENGTH HOLDS THE HIGHEST POSITION OF GDFC ELECTED OFFICE
WEAKNESS LIVES WITH MARTHA GODFREY
ATTACKING ATTRIBUTE PLAYS MULTIPLE POSITIONS
DEFENSIVE ATTRIBUTE "HAPPY TO DO A STINT IN A GOAL"

MILLIE 'V' PATERSON



STRENGTH FAST LEARNER
WEAKNESS LIVES WITH MILLIE PATERSON
ATTACKING ATTRIBUTE QUICK
DEFENSIVE ATTRIBUTE TACTICAL FLEXIBILITY

MARTHA 'MAT' GODFREY



STRENGTH FUNNY
WEAKNESS TRIES TO BE FUNNY
ATTACKING ATTRIBUTE COOL FINISHER
DEFENSIVE ATTRIBUTE "ONLY IF I HAVE TO"

ELLEN 'SNAKE' ROBERTSON



STRENGTH DETERMINED
WEAKNESS USED TO PLAY GOLF
ATTACKING ATTRIBUTE FIRST TOUCH
DEFENSIVE ATTRIBUTE READS THE GAME WELL

ALEX 'SPUNKY' RAWN



STRENGTH SHE'S A KEEPER
WEAKNESS NO LONGER PLAYS FOR SPURS
ATTACKING ATTRIBUTE STARTING COUNTER ATTACKS
DEFENSIVE ATTRIBUTE REFLEXES AND REACTION SPEED

CHLOE 'CAN ACTUALLY PLAY' MORGAN



STRENGTH HAS A CAR
WEAKNESS PLAYED FOR COLLEGE CANARIES
ATTACKING ATTRIBUTE PASSING
DEFENSIVE ATTRIBUTE INTERCEPTIONS

KATY 'NOT ON MY WATCH' COVELL

IN CONVERSATION WITH

GEORGIA IACOVOU'S WATERMELON SHORTS

WORDS BY EMMA MAGNUS @EMMAFMAGNUS, PHOTOGRAPH BY ISABELLE HOLTON @HOLTIA1993



Georgia Iacovou's charismatic watermelon shorts are a hurricane. They burst into the room, full of pep. "We've spent the last three months in a chest!"

This is a pair of shorts which, by their own assertion, are the answer to all of life's problems. "We're not one of your five a day. We're all of your five a day." Pink, juicy slices of watermelon pop against the shorts' dotted black background. It's an attractive, eye-catching pattern – and the shorts know it. "Watermelon is a very stylish fruit" they tell me. "I don't know whether you've noticed."

Teamed with Georgia's black and white striped banana t-shirt, black Dr Martens and, on occasion, avocado socks, the shorts are best known for their fruity combinations – and personality to

match. Over their three year tenure, they have become synonymous with their owner. We see watermelon shorts in the dead of winter: we think Georgia Iacovou.

Ironically, these gregarious shorts have had little use so far this summer, their prime season. "Playing football is a poisoned chalice – the sport has grown Georgia's legs so we're now tight across the thigh, being designed for men. We're waiting for her legs to wither again." Luckily for the shorts, they are a year-round clothing choice for Georgia. With a non-stop events calendar, from Murder on Zidane's Floor to Sunday 5s, they have become a winter staple. The shorts mention the astonishment of fellow revellers at a winter MOZF. "Everyone asked what we were doing. We were like, 'what do you mean what are we doing?'"

THIS IS A PAIR OF SHORTS WHICH, BY THEIR OWN ASSERTION, ARE THE ANSWER TO ALL OF LIFE'S PROBLEMS. "WE'RE NOT ONE OF YOUR FIVE A DAY. WE'RE ALL OF YOUR FIVE A DAY."

The shorts' confidence is infectious. I ask them to take me back to the place it all began: TK Maxx, New Cross. "The first thing you should know is that we're swimming trunks. Bet you didn't see that one coming." They chuckle, ripe with the joy of flouting expectations. They ask me to imagine the men's swimming trunks aisle in TK Maxx. "Most will be one colour. They might have what is considered to be a 'masculine' stripe down the side", they explain. "Obviously we stood out." They gesture proudly to their signature watermelon print. Georgia might have had reservations about buying swimwear for day-to-day use, but once she'd tried the shorts on, there was no going back. "She just thought: these are shorts, technically. It helped that the watermelon looked excellent." Equipped to tackle the ocean, these versatile shorts have adapted to –and indeed thrived on–the demands of hectic urban life. The shorts look wistful for a moment. "We still ultimately dream to be in the sea, since we are swimming shorts. Georgia doesn't swim a lot."

"And another thing", they ejaculate, before I can interject. "Georgia needs to learn that we have an inner netting which compensates just fine for knickers. She doesn't need to wear them with us." The shorts point to the savings she could be making on laundry, demonstrating that this happy-go-lucky legwear has its head screwed on. From their perspective, they exist to take care of business – and to live life to the full. Their go-go-go lifestyle comes at a price: the work is unrelenting. "You know, Georgia will be walking around the office, mindlessly spilling coffee and water on herself." They pull a face. "We tell her: don't worry; this doesn't matter. We will dry in an instant."

I'm curious about the power dynamic between Georgia and the shorts. Who's the one wearing the trousers, I wonder. "We absorb all of Georgia's failures" the shorts respond smugly. "She's a massive poser, using us to compensate for a boring personality." I point out that this feels unjustified: Georgia is funny, intelligent and famed for her defensive nous. How can they substantiate this view? An uncomfortable pause. Eventually, the cat is out of the bag. "Listen. We spend a lot of time between Georgia's crotch and the bike seat. It's not pleasant. This is payback."

This vindictive outburst betrays an ugly, spiteful side of the shorts' character – one that is ordinarily masked behind their upbeat print. It's a dark, troubling glimpse of the at times fractious relationship between shorts and owner. But it can't all be bad – hell, I've witnessed some of the good times with my own eyes. Surely there are some highlights of your time with Georgia, I ask hopefully. Post-football, they tell me begrudgingly, is a positive time. It makes all the difference that they're worn post-sweat rather than during sweat. It's up to another pair of shorts to bear that weight.

As spectators, this often means that the shorts can ride the post-football high without doing any of the heavy lifting themselves. "Our greatest memory was one day after [5-aside] football. Everyone was like: 'those are the best shorts I have ever seen.' We simply replied: 'You're correct. We are the best shorts.'" Georgia's post-football

high was contagious, they comment. "We sat there thinking: everything's great. Everyone loves us."

I know the feeling. Football is a great unifier. It's difficult not to be taken in by the sheer joy of the game. Georgia joined Goal Diggers in 2016 in the early King's Cross days, the shorts tell me. She was introduced by former GDFC legend, Roxy van Koningsbruggen, who had been scouted herself by Bina Edwards, GDFC's nippy forward. Since then, Georgia has not looked back. She's a regular at Wednesday night training and a devoted Ladies' Super Liga Sunday 5-aside player. "5s are her favourite", the shorts explain. "Obviously the refs, Jeff and Norm, are great. She's just doing more all the time when she's playing 5-aside. And it knackers her out nicely – she likes to feel tired afterwards. Sometimes she tells herself: there's no way I'm going to enjoy my beer afterwards unless I play football a lot first. We hope it starts again soon for her sake. She misses it so much."

I ask the shorts what it is about the beautiful game that has captured their owner's heart. They mention the positive reinforcement. "The first thing that struck Georgia was feeling part of a group and team. Because no matter what she did, everyone would be like, 'nice try Georgia.' It makes her –like all of us– feel good." There's also the exercise aspect and the feeling of improvement. "It's quite addictive." But the fact that it's casual football is crucial. "It takes the pressure off and she can have fun with it. It's just nice, the camaraderie." You can say that again! I laugh.

"Also" they add, "the only other lesbian Georgia knew before she joined Goal Diggers was her girlfriend. That's a nice side of it too – an added bonus." The club's queerness hit her on her first social outing to Rowan's Bowl. "After that, it just felt better somehow."

The self-assured shorts sit back in their chair. Returning the conversation deftly back to themselves, they point to the irony of Georgia's relationship with football. "We're great to wear after football. But the more football Georgia plays, the less she can wear us."

Maybe this is no bad thing, I think, after I have left the shorts sipping on a pornstar Martini in the hotel bar. The shorts might have beauty, but they are a cruel and unforgiving master.

HOW HAS COVID-19 AFFECTED THE PROFESSIONAL GAME?

WORDS BY LIV AMOS @LIVVY_AMOS, ILLUSTRATION BY ELLA LAMBIO@ELLA.LAMBIO



BACKGROUND

Following the rapid rise of COVID-19 cases earlier this year, on 13 March 2020 the professional football leagues in England announced that football would be suspended. A few days later, the UK Government announced that mass gatherings, including sporting events, would have to stop until further notice.

The colossal task of restarting professional football and completing the 2019/2020 season was colloquially termed 'Project Restart'. Domestic leagues have since finished or terminated their respective seasons. For now, Project Restart is therefore complete. But how did we get there? This article will look at some of the legal issues faced by professional football during COVID and its collective push to return to the beautiful game.

LEGAL ISSUES

League Competitions

Project Restart in the English Premier League has been considered a great success, with all remaining fixtures completed during June and July, albeit behind closed doors. Whilst the Premier League has – of the professional leagues

– understandably attracted the most public attention, it was events outside of England's top division which appear to have generated the most interesting legal issues.

The English Football League ("EFL") is made up of the Championship, League 1 and League 2 division. It is operated by a private company owned by the member clubs - the shareholders - who make up the EFL at any one time. As members, each club is entitled to vote on rule changes, such as those relating to finishing the season. In June, the EFL's League 1 and League 2 clubs voted to end their seasons early, with final places determined on an unweighted points-per-game basis, promotion and relegation retained, with reduced format play-offs. Some clubs were unhappy with the outcome of the vote (either on account of it resigning them to relegation, or missing out on the chance of promotion) and were reported to be considering legal action against the EFL.

Clubs across the border in Scotland and Wales have already done so. Similarly to the EFL, the Scottish Premier Football League ("SPFL") is a limited company whose shareholders are the clubs which participate in the four professional Scottish leagues. Two of those clubs (Hearts and

Partick Thistle) brought claims in the Scottish courts over an SPFL vote which empowered, and ultimately led to, the SPFL curtailing the 2019/20 season on a points-per-game basis. As a consequence, both clubs were relegated. The clubs argued that the vote was unfair, that it 'prejudiced' them as minority shareholders, and that (in so far as it dealt with promotion and relegation) it should effectively be annulled. The court referred the dispute to arbitration (an alternative and private forum, commonly used in sport) to be resolved, where the clubs' claims were ultimately rejected and the league's actions upheld.

In Wales, The New Saints (a club in the Cymru Premier division) brought a claim in the High Court over the Welsh FA's decision to adopt an unweighted points-per-game model to determine final league places, when it ended the Welsh season. The decision meant that the club finished second in the league, and would qualify for the UEFA Europa League, rather than the UEFA Champions League. The club argued that the decision did not comply with UEFA's relevant COVID guidelines, which said that a club's eligibility to compete in competitions the following season should be based on sporting merit, insofar as possible. The court rejected the club's challenge on all grounds.

Thus far, sporting bodies' decisions in determining their respective leagues have withstood legal challenge. Nonetheless, in a situation where there is so much at stake for clubs across the professional game, those who are unhappy with the way their seasons have ended may continue to roll the dice and contest decisions wherever possible.

Player Contracts

The start and end dates of football players' employment contracts are generally tied to the dates of the 'transfer windows' in their respective country (which are, in turn, linked to the dates of the playing season). As COVID caused the suspension and – in some cases, the extension – of football seasons across the world, it was clear that some contracts would therefore either not start or end as was intended. Clubs were faced with players potentially leaving on the last day of their contract, despite the season not having been finished. This caused significant uncertainty across the professional game.

In response to this uncertainty, the world governing body of football (FIFA) introduced COVID guidelines to the global football community. Concerning players' contracts, the guidelines "strongly" recommended that (i) existing contracts be extended until the new

THE COLOSSAL TASK OF RESTARTING PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL AND COMPLETING THE 2019/2020 SEASON WAS COLLOQUIALLY TERMED 'PROJECT RESTART'.

end date of the current season; and (ii) new contracts be delayed until the new start date of the next season. Underpinning these recommendations was a desire to preserve the integrity of competitions, by taking steps to provide that clubs were competing against each other with their original squads.

The guidelines also recommended that, in order to protect clubs from going bankrupt and secure a continued income for players, players and clubs "work together" to agree alternative employment conditions whilst football was suspended. The guidelines suggested that – in certain scenarios – FIFA may have upheld a club's decision to reduce or defer a player's wages, without the player's agreement.

Whilst the recommendations on both contract extensions and salary arrangements were, to an extent understandable, they raised a number of issues. The recommendations were stated to be subject to the parties' agreement and relevant national laws, but this was exactly the issue for players in England – under English law, any change to an employment contract must be mutually agreed. Therefore, if a player did not want to agree to a contract extension, or a new salary arrangement, they were free to reject them regardless of what FIFA considered to be in the best interests of the game.

As regards contract extensions, it simply wasn't in some players' interests to stay on. Players who had already agreed moves to other clubs may not have wanted to risk burnout or injury during an extended season and, consequently, jeopardise the following season with their new club. Even where all parties were happy for a player to extend their contracts (including, where applicable, the player's new club) some clubs simply wouldn't have been able to afford to do so. As club budgets are generally produced on the basis of a regular length season, the extra expenditure required to pay the player, extend the player's injury insurance policy and (potentially) pay an agent for negotiating the extension would have been unaffordable in some cases. Ultimately, clubs agreed their own arrangements with players as necessary.

As for salaries, some clubs continued them in full, but used the Government's furlough

scheme for help. Others asked players to defer part of their wages (e.g. Aston Villa and Everton) or take a cut (e.g. Arsenal). Proposals to place clubs who deferred players wages under a transfer embargo (i.e. a ban on signing new players) until salaries had been paid in full, never materialised.

Duty Of Care

In conjunction with the easing of restrictions throughout the UK, between May and July the Government set out guidance for its five-stage plan for the full resumption of elite sport in the UK. This outlined minimum requirements that all sports had to comply with, including COVID testing, social distancing, training session design, cleaning and hygiene.

In addition to the Government's requirements, the law will - in certain scenarios - impose on sports bodies a duty of care not to cause harm to participants and other individuals. The existence and extent of that duty is fact dependent and differs between sports and relevant sports bodies.

Prescribed duties of care, relating to ensuring health and safety, may also be owed under UK legislation. These include:

- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, which places duties on employers to towards their employees and, in certain scenarios, non-employees
- The Occupiers Liability Act 1957, which places a duty on those who occupy premises towards their visitors.

A football club, for example, might owe a duty as an employer to its players and its non-playing staff, and as an occupier of a football stadium to its fans and other visitors.

As we know, carriers of COVID can be asymptomatic, but the disease itself is highly infectious and can cause serious (potentially grave) health issues. The unique risks of the virus therefore forced all sports - including football - to reassess their ability to return to play in a manner which would not only comply with the Government's guidance, but would also satisfy their legal duties of care.

An important practical consideration here was whether clubs had the means and resources to comply with the COVID protocols that would have been required of them (testing alone was reported to cost the Premier League around £4,000,000). This may have proved difficult for clubs lower down the leagues, particularly those with far less financial resources.

Whilst the 2019/2020 season is now over, the challenge now moves to next season. The Government has recently announced its hope that - subject to successful piloting - crowds will be allowed back into stadiums in England in October. This will represent stage 5 of the Government's 5 stage plan and will inevitably require further COVID protocols, risk assessments, and costs. It should not be assumed that all clubs will meet the necessary standards. With the prospect of reduced capacity stadiums an inescapable reality, I am resigned to the fact that I am unlikely to get a ticket in the Kop end anytime soon.

CONCLUSION

This article has highlighted some of the many issues professional football has faced and will continue to face in future seasons. Our own experiences of COVID have taught us that situations can change rapidly and that 'the norm' is no longer determinative. If football is suspended again, these issues will rear their head once more. One of the challenges for football will therefore be to decide whether a 'plan B' should be agreed in advance (and if so, what that should be), or whether to respond to the pandemic as it develops.

What is clear is that playing behind closed doors, or in front of reduced capacity crowds, will continue to reduce clubs' gate receipts, and may reduce the value of any future television broadcast rights deals. The financial consequences to football from COVID will therefore likely extend far beyond the time we get a vaccine, and an industry which has enjoyed huge growth over recent decades will need to adapt to harder times ahead.

This article reflects information publicly available as at the time of writing, on 1 August 2020. It provides general information only and should not be treated as legal advice.

PODCAST

DESERT ISLAND KICKS

PODCAST BY MAY ROBSON @DESERTISLANDKICKS, ILLUSTRATION BY LILY GRANT @LILYROSEGRANT_ART



FOUR TRACKS, A BOOK AND A LUXURY: WHAT WOULD YOU TAKE TO A DESERT ISLAND?

My castaway in this third episode of Desert Island Kicks is Kate Allinson who has been a major part of GDFC for the past two years.

An all-rounder with extraordinary skills on the pitch, Kate has been described as having the ability 'to play literally anywhere'. She is the club Tour Sec along with Alex Rawn, and the duo have their eyes firmly on the prize of Milan 2021.

Famously the daughter of Allison Allinson, Kate grew up in family divided by the historic football

rivalry between Newcastle and Sunderland. She positions herself firmly in the Sunderland camp, a club that - in her own words - 'have achieved almost nothing.'

Kate's love affair with the game is set to a medley of emo scream-o and Peggy Gou.

Gou on, feast your ears. Listen at <https://soundcloud.com/desertislandkicks>.

QUE TAROT, TAROT WHATEVER WILL BE, WILL BE.

WORDS BY RACHEL BURNS @RACHELBURNING, ILLUSTRATIONS BY ANASTASIA KUCHTA @ANASTASIAKUCHTA



KEEPER | MENTOR OF SWORDS

Here we see someone who is committed and confident in their beliefs, a powerful communicator with a strong sense of right and wrong. Keeper, you might find yourself in a situation where your strategic skills, quick-handed thinking, and clear communication are being requested. Say YES to that new project (especially if it involves speaking your truth) or to have that sticky conversation with your flatmate, partner or friend knowing you will be able to keep your cool. Just be aware that this situation will ask you to be very rational in a “last five minutes of the game/my defenders are exhausted” kind of way.



DEFENCE | STAR

Phew, welcome home Star! The star represents a coming home to self – it shines bright with hope and positivity. It’s the light at the end of a tunnel to help guide you through choppy waters. Defenders, whatever you are going through or have been through (and tbh, there are more than enough reasons to feel like things have been a little rough or out of your control), know that the healing process is within you. Listen to your intuition and be gentle with yourself. That might even require you to defend that oh so special self-care time.

Tarot cards and their symbolism have been providing kitchen table wisdom for centuries. People use the cards to help answer a question. They don't predict the future but help us understand our own inner desires or intuition and can be a tool for self-reflection and guidance. To me, tarot helps us make sense of the world, feel seen and heard, validated and encouraged.

So, my fellow goals, I pulled a card for each of you depending upon your preferred footie position. The cards below offer guidance and advice for your month ahead on or off the pitch.



MIDFIELD | 6 OF PENTACLES

Pentacles represent our material lives – work, home, sex, nature. Here we see the dynamics of give and take play out. This card is all about generosity, giving your money and/or time to help build community resources, and importantly accepting help when offered. Like you on the pitch, Midfielder, you are being called to find balance with what you have – are you able to give some away with no strings attached or do you need to take a deep breath and ask for some help from friends?

STRIKERS | WHEEL OF FORTUNE

You've heard it before Striker – the only true constant in life is change. The Wheel of Fortune represents the cycles and transitions we go through. When this card pops up, it tends to mean that whatever tough or funky situation you might be in is changing for the better. If things are feeling out of your control, think about which bits you can control. Make your to-do list and go for it. For the rest, trust that the universe has your back and take a shot at what you want most.

OPINION

RAINBOW FLAGS

WORDS BY MAGGIE HAYES @MAGGIEANNEHAYES, PHOTO BY WILLIAM FONTENEAU



So, I love a rainbow. A rainbow's colours are pretty and they have strong positive connotations. They come out (pun intended) when rain and sunshine combine and there's treasure at the end of them - if you can ever get there. I'm also of Irish heritage so I like that imagery too!

However, I also love and relate to the rainbow as a queer woman. The rainbow is a widely recognised symbol of Pride. First used in 1978 at an LGBT Pride, the flag with the horizontal colours is used to represent LGBTQ+ inclusive spaces, places and people worldwide.* And Pride is a protest. In a society which is based on heteronormativity; white supremacy; patriarchal practices and norms, it is a protest to live — let alone live with or feel even an ounce of pride—in a system that does not want you to feel joy, belonging or pride. It does not want

people challenging or questioning the norms of the establishment. And it certainly doesn't want community.

The colours represent the breadth and diversity of our community as well the hope that, amidst the pain of isolation and oppression in a hetro world, there is light, love and positivity to be found. And there is strength in community. The rainbow is a symbol that belongs to the LGBTQ+ community**. Not to one person, not to one part of it, but to us all. Not everyone can be vocally proud and the flag doesn't solve that. But it can be a symbol of unity and hope when sometimes, as a queer person, you can feel amongst the loneliest and most scared people on the planet. The flag has had its problems. As Munroe Bergdorf said in June this year: "if your flag doesn't include the black and brown colours, then it is outdated".

In the months of June and July across Europe, rainbow flags are waved by queer*** people all over the world over as an act of joy; an act of resistance in existence. The more flags, the bigger the sense of collectivism. And collectivism and solidarity are what oppressed people and communities need and deserve. We remember the Stonewall Riots led by black trans and queer women that sparked the movement's growth amidst police brutality. Rainbow flags are a symbol of that community and solidarity. Pride Month, with its abundance of rainbow flags, carves out a space for us that does not exist the rest of the time.

The flags are waved in a commercial sense too, for sure. Call that what it is: corporations and institutions complicit in the prejudice, discrimination and suffering of LGBTQ+ people, like BA and the Home Office. It's hypocritical, it's amoral and it has no part in our community or in our Prides. Despite the commercialisation of much of Pride, it provides a sense of community, permission and celebration which to many folk are less accessible the rest of the year.

The cancelling of Pride this year due to COVID-19 is sad. And despite the obvious party reasons, it's sad for other reasons:

1. The isolation people around the world are talking about because of COVID-19 restrictions is not something completely alien to most queer people. For many LGBTQ+ people, this isolation compounds the feelings of loss, uncertainty and loneliness already experienced. Maybe we can't all see our friends that love and accept us. Mental health issues are higher in the queer community than amongst straight folk and lockdown certainly intensifies lots of those feelings without usual outlets.
2. Moreover, with the intersections we know exist, including that black people and those from a Bangladeshi background are 50% more likely to die from COVID-19 than a white person, this affects black and brown queer people in many, many ways.
3. Many queer people will be having to choose between being their authentic selves and keeping safe away from the virus by living with people who may not accept them or by taking work where they are mistreated.
4. Charity shouldn't ever be needed but Pride month does see a lot of money raised for charities that do valuable work for the LGBTQ+ community.

The issues LGBTQ+ folk face haven't gone away. If anything, many of the issues are further compounded. Therefore, the solidarity and support shouldn't be dropped for something 'bigger'.

Supporting LGBTQ+ rights isn't a trend. It isn't "in and off" season. Neither, in fact, is support for the NHS. A clap and a rainbow won't get the doctors and nurses the wages, respect and working conditions they need and deserve. I don't think a rainbow for the NHS should replace a Pride

LGBTQ+ PEOPLE WILL STILL FALL VICTIM TO THE DEADLY VIRUS OF HOMOPHOBIA, BIPHOBIA AND TRANSPHOBIA. THE SOLIDARITY, THE SUPPORT AND THE VISIBILITY ARE AS NEEDED AS EVER.

Rainbow. Seeing companies using the rainbow —their summer Pride branding ditched— has felt like a bit of a kick to be honest.

Have both if needed, but don't drop us like that. LGBTQ+ people will still fall victim to the deadly virus of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia. The solidarity, the support and the visibility are as needed as ever.

I don't blame the NHS and its brilliant hardworking, underpaid staff. Cycling past Lewisham Hospital in July, I saw a trans inclusive rainbow flag. It felt pertinent. They hadn't forgotten. They knew of the importance. They knew of the distinction.

It isn't only the companies dropping us that hurts (are we surprised?) It's also the rainbows in so many windows and doors of homes where, before, people have shied away from rainbows because of their direct link with the LGBTQ+ movement. Now they're in vogue and because they're not associated with us they'll be flown high and proud. What have you told your kids? In a few years' time, when Pride season is back on trend, will you wave them from your windows? Will you tell the kids what they represent - hope and the solidarity to millions of oppressed people worldwide?

I don't mind people drawing and putting up rainbows. They're nice things. And in this period, we've needed as much of that as possible. But as well as it simply not being what the NHS and key workers really needed (PPE, wages, safety) the co-opting of the rainbow flag has made me and many other queers feel uncomfortable that the discourse seems to have forgotten us. And that is an all too familiar feeling...

"Until we are all free, we are none of us free." Emma Lazarus

**The Flag was used by other groups, often aligned with objectives pertaining to peace before and*

since 1978. Including Andean Indigenous peoples in Peru and Bolivia .

***Not every LGBTQ+ person identifies with or likes the rainbow flag.*

**** I use this word to refer to LGBTQ+ people.*

PROTEST: WHAT NOW?

WORDS BY MAT CHES

The Black Lives Matter movement existed long before the death of George Floyd. As did calls for abolition and defunding the police. However, in the period that followed his death, the intensity and size of the movement grew bigger than ever before. Protests spanned the world. Calls for change filled social media platforms and many took to the streets to express their grief, anger and visions for a different future.

As calls for change turned into tangible frameworks for action, people began to read, email MPs, suggest policy changes or even call for the abolition of prison institutions. Yet alongside the debate came dispute about which actions and which people were right or wrong. For some, silence was taken as complicity: if you weren't emailing your MP then you didn't care. If you didn't agree with immediate defunding of the police, you couldn't be working towards a truly anti-racist agenda.

For some hoping to do the 'right' thing, this debate contributed to a sense of paralysis. Many found themselves thinking so deeply about the smallest action or statement that it exhausted their capacity to be effective. The aim of this article is to give examples that complicate the notion of right or wrong when trying to address a problem. Sometimes it is unclear where and how we should direct our efforts. Even when an obvious course of action presents itself, it is rare that anyone can predict the unintended consequences and misinterpretation that often follows. This is the nature of the vast and interconnected world we live in. In being rigidly prescriptive over who and what is "right", it is easy to assume that those with alternative perspectives should be treated with suspicion or are not useful in achieving our own agendas.

For me, real change is mostly seen when we embrace complexity and context. Engaging with intellectual humility and making space for others to contribute will result in authentic transformation. That is not to say that people should be unemotional nor should humility be mistaken for performative politeness. Making space is the difficult practice of engaging beyond your own echo chamber. Intellectual humility is trying to avoid becoming so committed to your own entrenched beliefs that you can no longer

reflect beyond them. Ultimately, you can ask the right questions, engage authentically and think critically. Answers don't come easily.

CONTEXT: REPARATIONS, SLAVERY AND DECOLONISATION

Context IS important. Anti-racism and decolonisation are intrinsically linked but separate projects. In response to BLM, many have called for reparations for the systemic racism experienced across the US. Reparations often include some form of material dispensation, traditionally money or land. However, the focus of these demands centre primarily around black Americans. Though the movement itself is not necessarily exclusive of other intersecting groups/identities, one group has received comparatively less attention: Native Americans.

Historically, the US colonial project violently stole Native American land and eradicated their ways of living. The image opposite shows you just how much land was taken since 1850 (though the process began long before then). Therefore, the land which dispossessed slaves were brought onto was in fact already seized Indigenous land. Even during the abolition of slavery, the US government promised large amounts of Indian land as reparations for plantation slavery. Emancipated slaves were not included into an autonomous nation but rather a settler colonial project. Therefore, when considering reparations as a potential solution to the systemic racism, we must also consider reparations in the context of decolonisation.

Why are these two aims not necessarily incommensurable? Black Americans have spent generations on American soil and do not necessarily have or feel any affiliations with the nations from which they were violently dispossessed. They also represent approximately 13% of the population.

Alternatively, indigenous people are rendered almost invisible. In most population studies, they are included in the asterisk * peoples as they make up less than 1% of the population. The invisibility in educational research transfers into an invisibility in the creation of the public policy which follows. When asking for reparations, does this include Native Americans who were also subject to racism, slavery but are in fact indigenous? Will land be given back to a group

1850**1865****1880****1990**

LANDS HELD BY NATIVE AMERICANS

which is now so small (a product primarily of the violence against them)? If so, would land which is now occupied by Black Americans be subject to this reparation? The point is not to provide any answers but to show the inherent intricacies of actioning a policy like reparations. Reparations can be considered, but the blueprint for dispensation would be fraught with competing and to some extent, legitimate claims.

SITES OF CHANGE

“Write to your MP.” This action has been viewed by some as the minimum an individual can do to enact support for BLM and address systemic racism. Whilst there are certainly grounds for these letters, they are not always effective. Why then is an action seen as a minimum requirement when there are so many ways alternative routes to change?

Often, we think of government as this hierarchical, bureaucratic entity where decisions that are made at the very top are immediately actioned. We imagine (mostly white men) sat in an ivory tower making conclusions that effect

WHEN ASKING FOR REPARATIONS, DOES THIS INCLUDE NATIVE AMERICANS WHO WERE ALSO SUBJECT TO RACISM, SLAVERY BUT ARE IN FACT INDIGENOUS?

people well beyond those rooms. To some extent, this is true. They do make decisions. And those decisions are important. This is why we address letters to elected officials in the first place.

However, the decision-making process is not a predictable series of events that results in a clear outcome. Even if you can persuade elected political officials towards an agenda, decisions are actively transformed and contested in everyday life by the practices of people at different institutional sites. State and non-state actors interpret law or policy in different ways, creating de facto norms of

their own. And these norms, laws or material changes constantly interact with local and global socio-economic forces. That is why law is filled with judicial precedents that interpret or reinterpret the same legislation differently. That is why planning officers grant approval to developers despite rarely meeting the minimum requirements for affordable housing. It is also the basis for many informal economies that exist outside of policy and legislation, making their own rules as they go.

Why is this relevant? Because it means that change can be actioned at multiple sites. Though government has a huge role to play, so do financial institutions, businesses and communities. Even on a micro level, you can mobilise small change at your work, in your neighbourhood or amongst peers. There is no right or wrong place to begin. Engaging others in conversation is crucial, especially if it is not an obvious choice. The ripple effects of even small actions can be larger than they appear on the surface. Having these debates with government is one thing but everyone is accountable for their actions, not just elected officials. Opening political imaginations to spaces traditionally considered “apolitical” or “powerless” is crucial approaching solutions in more original ways and addressing the realities of day to day interactions.

THE LAW OF UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES?

During most civil rights movements, the call for change is immediate. But radical style change can also birth unintended consequences which replace one violence with another.

The International Labour Organisation’s approach to breaching child labour laws, for example, is to swiftly shut down or sanction any factory found guilty. However, many in-country organisations are critical of this. If the process is not done holistically or without some form of support to those who inhabited it, once visible workers may transition into less visible, more hazardous forms of unsafe labour. The reality is our lack of knowledge around supply chains exacerbates the law of unintended consequences. When you shut down one factory, what happens to those links in the chain? Clearly, child labour is not acceptable. However, if those children become less visible, does shutting down immediately put them at more risk?

Equally, you would think to support brands that require certification to carry a specific type of stock that is fairly traded or environmentally friendly. Better for the environment or fairer to workers, no? Smallholders and farmers at the start of supply chains often are unable to afford

IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT NO-ONE GETS IT RIGHT 100% OF THE TIME. CRUCIALLY, WE ARE PART OF VASTLY INTERCONNECTED FORCES THAT CHANGE THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE EVERY DAY.

certifications. By committing to a premium requirement, smallholders are unable to compete with larger suppliers, soon drop their prices and sell to other places. This becomes a vicious cycle. As the certification is intended to uphold one standard, it may in fact have a perverse result or unexpected drawback.

Ultimately, though our values suggest intuitive pathways to change, reflection upon the realities/intricacies of problems may suggest otherwise. Is there a right or wrong in either of the two examples? Likely, people prioritise the outcomes or values they resonate most with. Sometimes, there is space for entirely restructuring the system and suffering the short-term consequences for a long-term agenda. Alternatively, painful, piecemeal deliberation can ensure effective and sustained resolutions that do not create other equally bad issues.

CONCLUSION

As COVID-19 continues to challenge the way we live and BLM sparks vast amounts sustained activism, a lot of people are questioning what role they should be playing. Part of that role is clarifying values and deciding how best to apply belief systems for change. The above examples serve to highlight just how complicated decision-making processes are (even for experts from those sectors). It is important to remember that no-one gets it right 100% of the time. Crucially, we are part of vastly interconnected forces that change the socio-economic landscape every day. There will be time for pragmatism and time for idealism. Time for revolution and time for gradual change. With some exceptions, there is rarely right or wrong. All we can do is engage with issues critically, make space for those who challenge our beliefs and engage the nuance often required for intelligent, transformative change. How we achieve change is just as important as the change itself.

PROTEST. PRO-TEST.

WORDS BY BETH MILES @BETHGMILES, ILLUSTRATION BY ANASTASIA KUCHTA @ANASTASIAKUCHTA



As a gemini (sorry), i get my fill in life from interactions with people. face-to-face with friends and family and football and club nights and even the shared community of laughing out loud at the same joke with a stranger in the cinema. lockdown hit me hard and i felt i'd never adjust.

but in lockdown i got my fill in life from my two housemates and our old friends bette, tina, shane, alice, even jenny. life before coronavirus was hectic and non-stop. i was constantly double, triple, quadruple-booked, desperate not to miss out on all london has to offer. but life in lockdown allowed me more time to just be. to be on my own and actually enjoy it.

as things have started to open and group sizes allowed to swell, i realise i've swung far the other way on the social pendulum. in some ways i feel i'm starting again. in conversation i don't get my words out the same way, i feel anxiety rising a little as i sit down on the grass 1m away from someone i've known for years, worrying that our chemistry has been altered from time apart or that i'll not be able to be funny or that i'll not seem myself. tonsils and noses swabbed, examined by strangers. the most anyone has seen of our inner selves for a long time.

i have a constant battle waging internally between my old-normal and new-normal self. old-normal me is heavy and expectant that life will go back to 'how things were' and new-normal me protests, telling old-normal me to kindly see themselves to the bin and that 'how things were' no longer exists.

protest is a powerful thing. to me, it feels big and important and physically tangible, involving lots of people all in one place fighting for one cause. but i guess i've come to realise that individually we're all protesting. externally. for some of us our very being is a protest against unfairly rigged social structures. and internally. with ourselves. our old-normal and our new-normal selves in a stand-off. amongst other layers of thoughts and feelings and life.

but new normal me is right. protesting, protesting. 'how things were' will never be again, and that's okay. old-normal should firmly remain in the bin, and as time goes on new-normal will gain confidence, be able to construct sentences properly once more, make people laugh, talk about more than taking out the bin as a highlight of their day. and anyway, real friends take you as you are.

I GUESS I'M AN ABOLITIONIST NOW

WORDS BY GEORGIA BRUCE @GEORGIAFBURCE

In the aftermath of the Black Lives Matter protests, notions of abolition have inched closer to the surface of activist discussion and as a result I have, for the first time, really considered what prison abolition might look like. Almost nothing that follows is my own thought - it's all been said already by other people, at other times and probably with nicer words and sometimes with nice pictures and stuff. So read on if you like, if you're vaguely interested in what I've learnt over the past few months but also if not no worries, you can go look at the hot piccies my housemates and I submitted to the romance section instead!!!! Or do both!!!

Ok. So.

A couple of months ago, if you'd have suggested to me that all prisons should and could be abolished, I'da thought you were genuinely on one. At first glance, prison abolition seems kind of impossible; a far reaching, almost fanciful project of hypotheticals. 'The prison,' says Angela Davis, 'is seen as an inevitable and permanent feature of our social lives.' In our collective consciousness, we seem to have naturalised the notion that, somewhere, a huge and indistinct building exists in which those of us who are 'dangerous' and 'criminal' are kept securely and separately, away from the rest of us 'harmless' and 'law-abiding' folk. Somehow, we are at the same time aware and ignorant of the existence of prisons, and from both standpoints, to abolish them seems a virtual impossibility.

But lately, I've come to learn that the abolitionist project encompasses far more than just the abolition of prisons. Despite its provocative titular ambition, abolition demands more than it says on the tin. To advocate for abolition is (it turns out!) to advocate for systems of support that serve the community more effectively than putting people in cages. Abolitionists hope to address the root causes of (mass) incarceration, those structural inequalities that mean that some people are, from the outset, vastly more likely to end up in prison than others. Abolition means getting rid of prisons, but it also means better healthcare, housing, jobs and education, it means environmental justice, it means practical solutions to the structural inequalities that lead to criminality.

So why get rid of prisons? Well, to put it bluntly, they don't work. No one person or type of person is inherently more likely to commit crime than any other. But the make-up of the prison population is skewed such that certain categories of people are vastly overrepresented. Here's the stats bit to put some numbers to a failing system. BAME people make up about 26% of the UK prison population, where they constitute only 13% of the general population. In youth prisons, they represent 41%. At least 24% of adult prisoners have arrived in prison having gone through the care system (compared to only 2% of the general population). Adults released from custodial sentences of less than 12 months have a reoffending rate of around 60%. Finally, 1741 people have died in police custody or following police contact in England and Wales since 1990. What all these digits show is that some people are, from the moment they are born, more likely to end up in a prison than others. And once they are there, they enter a system which fails to offer any proper rehabilitation, fails to successfully prevent further crime and in fact perpetuates and perpetrates further acts of violence itself.

In the face of a failing system, why isn't the focus on simply improving those structures we already have in place? Well, simply because even a reformed prison system doesn't necessarily address the root causes of criminal behaviour. In fact, many reforms to the prison system enacted by the government have contributed to longer carceral sentences, the normalizing of increased surveillance and the growth of the prison industrial complex rather than its dissolution. Broadly, as far as I can tell, the abolitionist stance on making prisons 'better' is to advocate only for reforms that will reduce the power of an oppressive system of policing, imprisonment and surveillance, rather than sustain it. Abolitionists have, among many other things, worked to end solitary confinement and the death penalty, stopped new prisons being built, freed incarcerated people from prison and disputed the widening scope of punishment through hate crime laws. Abolitionists would oppose those reforms to prisons which would extend the impact of an oppressive system of punishment. So for example, the move towards greater use of technological monitoring systems does, in a sense, address the problem of overpopulation in prisons. But electronic

monitoring is nonetheless just another form of incarceration, a dehumanising limitation of a person's freedom.

But if prisons don't work and crime still exists, what are our alternatives? This, admittedly, is where abolition can feel intimidating and where I, a fledgling abolitionist, have felt a little lost. There are a couple of crucial points here I think. The first is that, if we focus our efforts as abolitionists on the production of programmes or policies that serve our vulnerable communities, vast swathes of people now considered 'criminals' will never be forced into a position where prison is an option. The second consideration is that prison doesn't work and, as such, the alternative visions of justice that we consider don't yet need to be perfect. They just have to be better than what we've got at the moment. And there are large schools of thought which suggest that there are forms of justice which are more successful than punitive justice. The most "radical" alternative to our current justice system is 'transformative justice'. This, in the words of adrienne maree brown, is the type of justice that goes 'all the way down to the root of the harm [and asks], "What do we need to do at the root system so that this harm is no longer possible?"' What would it look like to respond to harm in a way that doesn't create more harm and more trauma? Transformative justice is a way of responding to justice within our own communities, away from oppressive systems of justice that fall back on further violence. It refocuses the response to violent behaviour on the attempt to create and cultivate the very things that we know can help to prevent violence, things like resilience, safety, healing and connection.

Alternative justice is the aspect of the abolitionist movement that feels the most nebulous and the most tricky to me, but I suppose that's because it is?! And that's OK!?! And really, the question of alternative forms of justice only gets properly sticky when we talk about what abolitionists have termed the 'dangerous few', that is, the existence of a small minority of repeat offenders who commit violent and unforgivable crimes and who we would consider 'dangerous' if they were to be released into society. By both general and legal standards, it is impossible to determine what would make a person 'dangerous' or not. But even if we do concede that there is, in fact, a 'dangerous few', the percentage of the prison population that would make up that few is small. An extremely conservative estimate that employs a thoroughly sensitive understanding of risk, would put the number at

AT FIRST GLANCE, PRISON ABOLITION SEEMS KIND OF IMPOSSIBLE; A FAR REACHING, ALMOST FANCIFUL PROJECT OF HYPOTHETICALS.

a maximum of 20%. So, as abolitionists, it may be helpful when confronting the problem of the 'dangerous few', to focus our attention on the people who do not pose a risk to society but who nonetheless constitute in excess of 80% of the prison population.

So, broadly, that's my learning. I hope that made sense? There is truly so much more to say but it's hard to get words around it all. Mainly, I'm grateful for the BLM protests which instigated this learning process for me, and I also hugely recommend that anyone who's interested in learning more heads to the website of Abolitionist Futures, where they have a brilliantly exhaustive set of easily accessible reading lists.

One more thing before I go. Abolition is (clearly) something I've only recently explored in any depth. But, since I have, I've found that it's offered me a new and powerful mode of perspective in many other areas of my life. Part of what I've found most fun in learning about abolition is applying its theories to other bits of thinking, to work in extremes and to consider the abolition of other problematic structures, then to consider their radical alternatives and finally to try and figure out the changes we can make to get there. Take the stalwart structures of heterosexuality: marriage and the nuclear family. Consider abolishing them. And now consider what, as a necessary consequence, we would advocate in its place. Community living? Shared wealth and resources? Queerness? Polyamory? All of the above? Sound lush! OK, next. Let's take down school expulsions, which feed the school to prison pipeline. What do we ask for instead? Better interpersonal education? Early applications of alternative forms of justice? Free school meals and better access to child support? Nice! Try it for yourself! It's the beautiful Baldwinism, 'the impossible is the least that one can demand', in practice.

OPINION

THE NEW WAVE OF VIRTUE SIGNALING IN THE WAKE OF WORLDWIDE PROTESTS

WORDS BY GEORGIA IACOVOU @GEOIAC, ILLUSTRATION BY LILY GRANT @LILYROSEGRANT_ART

From Amazon's facial recognition moratorium to the rejection of Chinese apps: why are Big Tech and nation states alike withholding services?

On the 17th of June 2020, [aljazeera.com](https://www.aljazeera.com) reported that there were 20 Indian soldiers killed in a violent skirmish against China, due to an ongoing border dispute. India chose to retaliate digitally, by banning 59 Chinese apps, including TikTok and WeChat, from Indian app stores. In their government announcement, they stated that their reasons for doing this were because these apps “engaged in activities ... prejudicial to [the] sovereignty and integrity of India.”

That makes sense — apps like TikTok didn't get where they are today by *not* intrusively harvesting user data for profit. However, I feel that the more likely desired affect of this move was not to protect Indian citizens from underhanded mobile apps, but to hurt China's economy. India was TikTok's largest overseas market, after all. Not only was this an effective move, but a relatively easy one: why bother the UN with a cumbersome, old-fashioned economic sanction when you could just ask Apple and Google to exclude a few dozen apps from your countries' stores? Why indeed! Apple and Google were fine with this.

But wait, important side-note: according to Indian law, this decision did not need to be made public. So, perhaps they were also doing it...out of protest? Banning these apps certainly doesn't help India either; this could put Indian software engineers and content creators out of work (you can make a lot of money doing TikTok dances). Furthermore, are we to assume that it will be easy to create and maintain domestic alternatives to all 59 Chinese apps?

This is not India's first sojourn into a nationwide rejection of digital services. In 2016, following protests across the country, India banned Facebook Free Basics, an app that behaves as a 'free' gateway to small collection of websites and services. The upside to Free Basics was that you could do a few essential things online without having to pay for mobile data. The downside was, every request went via Facebook's servers, thus making them privy to every inch of your browsing — in other words the app was an intrusive insight into the lives of people who cannot afford mobile internet (lest we forget that privacy is a privilege).

Those protesting against the app called it 'digital colonialism'. This was the first time a Facebook product was rejected by an entire nation. Zuckerberg's response: “some internet is better than no internet”. Nope, India have higher standards than that actually. Maybe Facebook should try something more along the lines of what Google are doing: they recently invested \$4.5bn in Jio, India's largest ISP. It's things like this that may mark the beginning of the 'Splinternet': where the World Wide Web is no longer a thing, and the internet is regulated country by country. Ew...

Now, this bout of anti-China sentiment isn't only coming from India: the likes of Facebook, Google, and Twitter are currently refusing to hand over user data to Chinese law enforcement. Why are they doing this now, when they've never had a problem with doing it before? Two reasons:

REASON ONE: on the 30th of June, Beijing passed a horrid new security law in Hong Kong. It has everything you'd expect from an authoritarian government: broad language, vague definitions, and the very real threat of life imprisonment (e.g. damaging public transport is now considered an

act of terrorism, and terrorists can get a life sentence). In other words, the law gives the authorities in Hong Kong new powers to essentially stamp the protests that have been going on for a year now.

REASON TWO: In the wake of this new law, Hong Kong citizens have been either ‘cleaning up’ or simply deleting their social media accounts for fear of being surveilled. A great way to put a stop to this terrifying account-purge, is for social media giants to simply cease their cooperation with law enforcement — thus cementing the notion that the security of our human rights are at the mercy of Big Tech’s business decisions. But look it’s fine: this time protecting human rights and profit margins are *one in the same*. Honestly, at this stage, this is just good PR; nobody likes social media anymore...they need to do *something* to get us back on side.

Right, let’s not get away from ourselves. We have new and horrendous surveillance measures in the West too — coupled gruesomely with the Black Lives Matter movement. Imagine (or...experience first hand) a racist police officer wading through a crowd of protesters. Now, add to that a body-cam powered with biased facial recognition technology.

Currently, there seems to be little way around this: if a machine is trained on biased datasets put together by a biased society, then it too will be biased. Ah yes, all the implications of traditional human bias, automated and amplified with the cold, indifferent speed of a machine.

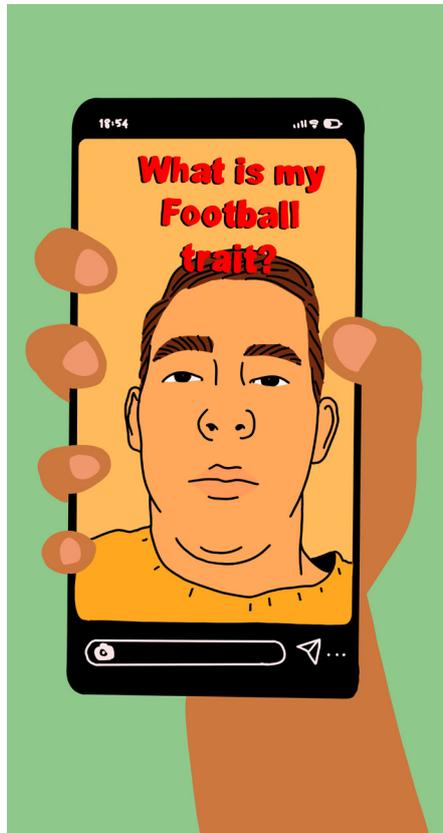
We’ve seen a number of responses to this problem recently. In 2019 a company called Axon actually listened to their AI ethics board, and stopped putting their facial recognition technology into their body cameras. The reason: “Face recognition technology is not currently reliable enough to ethically justify its use on body-worn cameras.” In the same year, San Fransisco became the first major city in the US to ban the use of the technology by police. In June of this year, Boston did the same.

One of the biggest players in the facial recognition game is of course Amazon. Their technology, called Rekognition, has been widely used by the police, and in consumer products. In some cases... both at once. Perhaps you’ve heard of Ring, a smart doorbell (Amazon-owned), that employs the use of Rekognition, so it can tell you if the person at your door is suspicious (yep, sounds awful already).

Last year it was revealed that Ring had been working closely with police departments across the US in order to train their officers to become better salespeople:

Ring provided police with scripts to help them sell Ring doorbells, and convince existing doorbell owners to hand footage over without a warrant. Wow, what a grisly blurring of law enforcement and underhanded advertising techniques.

Rekognition is of course grossly inaccurate, and the inaccuracies disproportionately land on people of colour. A damning study from 2018 shows that Rekognition misclassifies darker-skinned women as men 31% of the time. The technology has even been tested on US congress: ACLU scanned every member’s face, and 28 of them were misidentified against a criminal database. Oh and yes, most of them were people of colour.



On the 10th of June, Amazon announced a one year moratorium on the use of Rekognition by governments, saying “We hope this one-year moratorium might give Congress enough time to implement appropriate rules, and we stand ready to help if requested”. We’ve known for years now that their technology — and their practices in implementing it — have had a lot of serious problems, so why do this now? Perhaps it has something to do with the fact that Black Lives Matter has gained a promising amount of momentum this summer? How useful, then, that the moratorium is only a year long; just enough time for the mainstream media to forget all about this movement.

When it comes to responding to protests, Amazon are just doing what any other big tech firm would do (and has already done). They know full well that Congress can’t figure this whole thing out in just one year. As is routine with Big Tech, they have simply spat out a piece of harmful, unchecked technology into the world, and retracted it only when the

PR gains outweigh the monetary ones.

What’s become clear over the course of the recent protests is that — like the pandemic — protests for basic human rights are just yet another crisis for technology companies to leverage. They throw money at marketing stunts which are disguised as acts of solidarity. Meanwhile, their bloated lobbying arms perpetuate all of the long-standing systemic issues that we are currently protesting against. India’s stand against China is at least for good reason; the Big Tech response to protests are no better than the police officers who make a show of marching in support, just to make arrests later when the cameras are off.

“THESE ARE GOOD HOBBIES!”: WARGAMING AND ROLE-PLAYING AMID LOCKDOWN

WORDS BY JP CASEY @JP__CASEY, PHOTOS BY NO MORE DAMSELS

At the time of writing, it's day one-hundred-and-thirty of my personal quarantine. This is a figure that neatly serves as both one of few reminders of the existence of linear time in this wild yet relentlessly monotonous year, and a convenient shorthand for exactly how uncomfortable my brain feels at this point in time; I am one-hundred-and-thirty times more sick of lockdown now than I was when this all started a hundred years ago in March.

Considering this, I have been yearning to find new hobbies, or blow the dust off some old ones, to get me through this gauntlet of identical lethargic Thursday afternoons, and considering my nerdy disposition, role-playing games (RPGs) and wargames have been among my chief interests. Yet these are hobbies archetypically tinged with an uncomfortable helping of toxic masculinity and dismissive machismo, with no shortage of men bearing an eerie resemblance to the Simpsons' Comic Book Guy standing at the gates of these activities, vast tomes of lore in one hand and print-outs of the latest rules updates in the other, challenging all mere mortals who would dare to consider an interest in the hobby to a round of invasive questioning and arbitrary examinations into one's geeky credentials.

Yet these gatekeepers are not as ubiquitous as they once might have been, and while these hobbies have a ways to go in terms of improving the diversity of both their fictitious subject matter and real-life fanbases, strides are being made to broaden the scope of these games. At the forefront of this trend is No More Damsels (NMD), a charity based in London that works to encourage the participation of women, trans and non-binary people in such hobbies, through a mixture of online resources and in-person events.

ROLLING DICE AND PAINTING MINIS

These nerdy pastimes, while different in some ways, share a number of similarities in tone and purpose, and as a result, the demographic of the people they tend to attract. While endlessly varied in rules and emphasis, most RPGs follow the same structure: a number of players, each playing a different character, meet up to go on adventures, solve puzzles and defeat monsters operated by a “game master” (or “dungeon master” if you're feeling dramatic). The settings can range from classic Tolkienian fantasy, where players control Elves and Orcs doing battle against the forces of supreme evil, to wackier, more humorous environments, such as the brilliant Visigoths vs Mall Goths [link - <https://necromancy.itch.io/goths>], where the titular cliques play through a queer dating sim in a Los Angeles shopping mall in 1996.

RPGs have seen a resurgence in popularity in recent years, with the kids from Stranger Things playing Dungeons and Dragons and the much-anticipated Cyberpunk 2077 video game a remake of the RPG of the same name. These games tend to rely on a combination of role-playing and abstracted chance rolls to determine what happens; for instance, a player can decide that their character will swing their sword at a monster, and then roll a die to determine how effective this swinging is.

This same idea, of player choice in the real-world implemented by dice rolls in the game-world, is used in wargaming, where players typically play as generals and commanders, moving troops around a board to defeat an enemy army on the field of battle. Invented in Prussia in the 19th century as a means to teach generals how to better organise their troops, the hobby has since spun out into more fantastical realms, with the latest iteration of the genre-dominating



Warhammer 40K set around a faction of bio-engineered superhuman soldiers doing battle against a resurgent empire of undead robots that had all but gone extinct. We're not in the Franco-Prussian War any more.

TO BOLDLY GO

On paper, then, these hobbies seem ill-suited for playing during a lockdown, with the inability to meet up to roleplay or push tiny plastic soldiers around a board an obstacle to playing these games. However, as Sarah Pipkin, secretary of NMD tells me, the preparation and behind-the-scenes work involved in these games has gone unchanged.

"I think wargaming in particular has had a boost during lockdown, not necessarily in actually playing the games, but in that a big element of wargaming is just sitting and painting models," she said. "And a lot of people are looking for creative things to do, while they're stuck at home all day, every day, and there's nothing that can fill that time like trying to paint 100 tiny plastic soldiers. One of the things that I did at the beginning of lockdown is I made a separate Instagram account, just for all my painting."

The process of playing the games has also been aided by many of the newer technologies that are enabling some of us to effectively, if not comfortably, work from home. The sandbox game Tabletop Simulator has emerged as a surprisingly robust tool for playing Warhammer 40K and other wargames, with dedicated communities of modders and tinkerers working overtime to bring even the more unique and rare elements of these games to the fore. Similarly, video calling software enables RPGs to be played remotely, while dedicated platforms

"PEOPLE ARE REALLY STARVED FOR A NORMAL HUMAN INTERACTION," SAID SARAH PIPKIN. "I THINK THAT NOW IS A GOOD TIME TO BE INVOLVED IN A TIME-SUCKING HOBBY, LIKE PRETENDING TO BE AN ELF FOR FOUR HOURS ONCE A WEEK.

such as Roll20, which combine virtual character sheets, shared battle maps for players and dungeon masters, and built-in voice chat, are imperfect, but perfectly serviceable, ways to get one's RPG fix during lockdown.

"People are really starved for a normal human interaction," said Pipkin. "I think that now is a good time to be involved in a time-sucking hobby, like pretending to be an Elf for four hours once a week."

There is an ironic joy in these games too, as that which once provided an escape from the drudgery of daily life has now become a welcome and much-needed source of regularity and structure. My weekly RPG nights, on Wednesday and Thursday evenings, are honestly the only thing helping me tell one day from another these days, and the regularity of being an Elf for a few hours a night, in a controlled environment with people I love and a setting with defined rules and boundaries, has been a vital comfort for me amid the lockdown.

"Things like wargaming and RPGs have always had a really strong escapism element, and now



more than ever, we need that escapism,” said Pipkin. “Having things that are fun that aren’t just work-related or family-related are good for building resiliency and for building a community that can look after you, when you’re either unwell or if you’re having mental health issues, or if you have to stay at home for four months because of a global pandemic.

“I think post-lockdown, it will be a good time to be like: ‘these are good hobbies!’”

THE QUEST FOR REPRESENTATION

I am, however, very fortunate in that my RPG groups are very queer and trans-friendly, perhaps a not unreasonable consequence of their construction, in that I have spent much of my adult life trying to convince my queer friends to play Dungeons and Dragons with me. Yet this experience is not as comfortable for many women, trans and non-binary people who are looking to get into the hobby, and Pipkin is aware of the work that still needs to be done to this end.

“RPGs, and to a greater extent wargaming, is very male dominated, or if it’s not male dominated, it’s very macho or very masculine, which can make it intimidating to try out on your own,” she said. “And that is, in fact, a representation of the games themselves; a lot of books, a lot of the models that are produced either feature a lot of men, or if they do have women, in the illustrations or in the models, they’re very sexualized, which can be really off-putting.

“We got started in part because we found ourselves in the position of trying to introduce what we thought were really reasonable safety tools and measures to ensure that there wasn’t sexual harassment in our local club.”

The charity has already held a number of events to promote its goals, from an introductory RPG session for women, trans and non-binary people that had around 100 attendees to a communal painting group. These events have also been run in conjunction with Bad Moon Café in south London, a board game and wargaming venue that

has allowed NMD to use its space, and is exactly the kind of support from the existing wargaming community that Pipkin thinks would be vital to ensuring a long-term shift towards greater diversity.

“There’s just not a lot of consideration for the needs of gender diverse people, and there’s lots of opposition of recognising that there is a there is a problem with sexism and transphobia in the hobby so that there’s a lot of resistance to making change,” she said. “If you’re a man in the hobby, you wouldn’t have been discriminated against and so you don’t really see the point of putting in measures that prevent discrimination.

Even amid the pandemic, the charity has not stopped its work, publishing an open letter [link - <https://www.nomoredamselsrpg.org/open-letter-to-gw>] to Games Workshop, the company behind Warhammer 40K, to call for more concrete action to eliminate toxicity from the community, which received a dozen signatures from wargaming groups across the country.

“We create online resources that we hope that other clubs or individuals can use for free, and we’re trying to keep these online resources up to date and create one so respond to community needs,” said Pipkin, of the work the group continues to do amid lockdown. “We’re also getting more involved with activism around trying to get corporations to be a bit more diverse and a bit more open in their commitment to diversity.”

Pipkin hopes the work of the group, and others like it, will help open up these hobbies to a wider range of players and participants; speaking from personal experience, it has been a great shame that I have, in the past, felt unable to share some of the activities I love the most with some of the people I love the most, and NMD is set to continue to work to improve diversity at the table.

“The greatest impact on our community level is just running events where there are women and non-binary and trans people there just playing the game and just making that a normal thing,” concluded Pipkin.

SUMMER PURSUITS

WORDS BY KATY CASTLE @KCASTLEK, ILLUSTRATION BY LILY GRANT @LILYROSEGRANT_ART



Goals, let's not kid around. Assuming you're currently reading this from within the UK, this here United/Devolved Kingdom is the most affordable, sustainable and downright viable land to enjoy Summer 2020 in. And with football just around the corner, it's about time to combine sunshine with adrenaline. Who else had an extreme exercise regime in Early Pandemic (E.P.) only to remember in July that a beverage in a beer garden is far more fun than a run? It is a sad truth that my VO2 max has dropped quite considerably since aforesaid E.P., and don't lie, I bet yours has too. (See this article if you've no idea what I'm talking about).

The thing is, Goals, at the time of writing there are many sporting activities to dabble in this summer. You can crawl in the pool, traverse a climbing wall and demonstrate your forehand on all the courts in the land. You can even sweat on a static bicycle amongst a group of strangers again - what a baffling enterprise. However, if you, like me, find climbing too much for your delicately-skinned fingers, never quite mastered front crawl's complex breathe-and-swim requirement or are just simply bad at tennis, I have compiled here a list of UK summer activities to rival that Greek island swimming holiday we none of us can afford. Call it a "protest" against the increasing requests for your fiercely guarded Gringotts stash. (Why the Harry Potter reference, you ask? Because Quidditch is a sport, I say.)

1. Treat your bike to new terrain. Did you know you can cycle along the Thames all the way to far off Richmond? See how they live at the bottom of the earth, marvel at the architecture (the same guy who designed Highgate) and how wide and wild the river is. Or if you're itching to get out of London, it's a heady fifty-five-mile pedal from Victoria Park to Southend-on-Sea. Remember your puncture repair kit, have a paddle in the sea and get the train home.

2. Heated chlorinated pools? No thanks, I like to freeze with the weeds. Plunge back to nature in the swimming ponds at Hampstead Heath. If you are actually an experienced swimmer, try the West Reservoir lake just behind the Castle climbing centre in Hackney for a hardier and wetsuit-only option - pre-booking necessary. Or for a day trip, my sources tell me that Chipstead Lake near Sevenoaks, Kent is delightful.
3. Spectator sports. A very good option for those for whom shots are more readily associated with tequila than a football. Grab a coffee and wander down to your local park courts to seat yourself by whichever tennis match takes your fancy. Call yourself umpire and count score in case they forget. If things get heated, or boring, just switch bench! Cheeky freebie - sit next to a tennis lesson to pick up tips on technique.
4. Anti-every-sport-except-football? Support the arts instead. Buy a pass for Fringe of Colour, a brand new online arts festival showcasing films made by Black and Brown people/People of Colour throughout August. Black Ticket Project (BTP) supplies free tickets for theatre and creative events to young black people who might not otherwise connect with it - help support their commitment to promoting diversity in the arts. Edinburgh Fringe are providing a fundraising platform for artists, venues and creatives, and are hosting a live online variety show every Friday in August.

BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

WORDS BY ANASTASIA KUCHTA @ANASTASIAKUCHTA

Want to lose yourself in a great novel while also increasing your awareness of the factors fueling racial injustice? Great! Check out the books below, all written by women of colour.

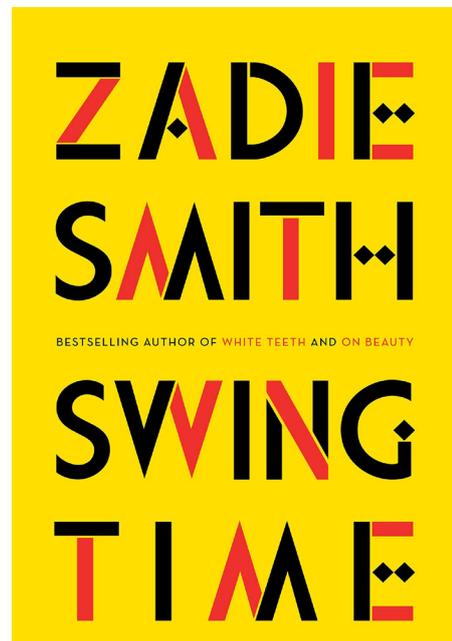
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SWING TIME BY ZADIE SMITH

“We were the first generation to have, in our own homes, the means to re- and forward-wind reality: even very small children could press their fingers against those clunky buttons and see what-has-been become what-is or what-will-be.”

The novel follows the friendship, over 26 years, of two mixed race girls growing up on estates in North London. The narrator meets Tracey in dance lessons, becoming fast friends, bonded by the colour of their skin. The novel travels with the narrator from London, to New York and West Africa, as she explores the world as an assistant to an Australian pop star named Aimee. The novel moves gracefully back and forth through time, exploring society while coming to terms with what really matters in life when the music stops.



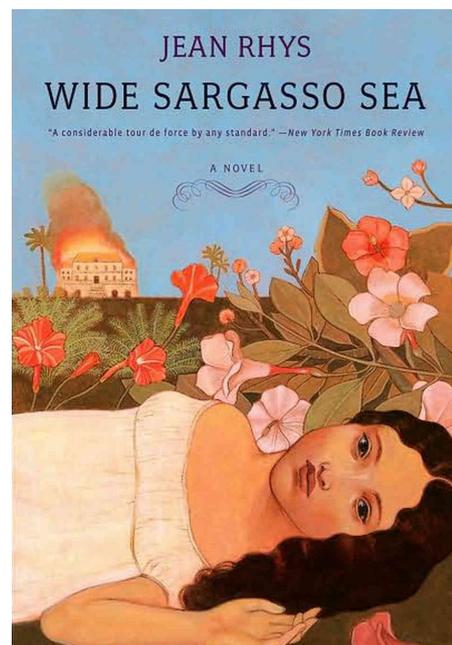
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WIDE SARGASSO SEA BY JEAN RHYNS

“It is the tragedy of a distinguished mind and a generous nature that have gone unappreciated in a conventional, unimaginative world. A victim of men’s incomprehension of women, a symptom of women’s mistrust of men.”

This novel is a feminist and anti-colonial response to Charlotte Brontë’s classic “Jane Eyre”. Published in 1966, Rhys explores the background behind Mr. Rochester’s marriage to Antoinette Cosway, “the madwoman in the attic,” in Brontë’s Jane Eyre. Antoinette, a Creole heiress from Jamaica, is wed to Mr. Rochester. Caught in an oppressive patriarchal society, Antoinette’s journey from Jamaica to the attic in Thornfield Hall explores postcolonial themes, such as racism, displacement, and assimilation.



3

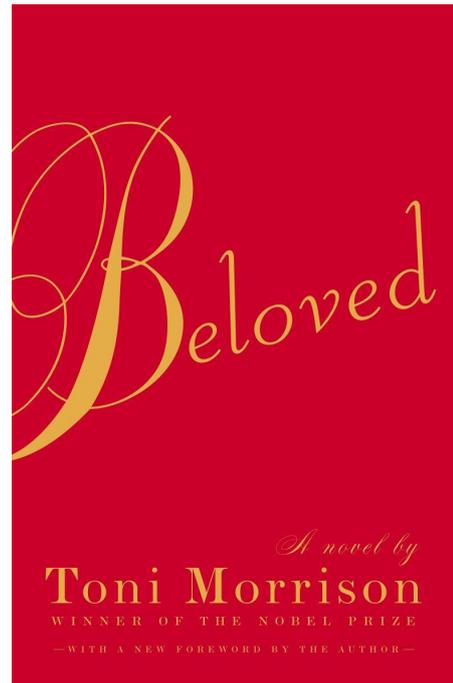


BELOVED

BY TONI MORRISON

“Freeing yourself was one thing, claiming ownership of that freed self was another.”

Set after the American Civil War, this novel was inspired by the true life story of Margaret Garner. Garner, an African American, escaped slavery in Kentucky in 1856 by crossing the Ohio River to Ohio, a free state. She was captured and killed her child rather than have her taken back into slavery. This novel is dedicated to “Sixty Million and more”, referring to the Africans and their descendants who died as a result of the Atlantic slave trade. The book is set in post-American Civil War Cincinnati, Ohio. The book explores the lives of the protagonist Sethe and her daughter Denver after their escape from slavery. Sethe and her home are haunted by the ghost of “Beloved,” the daughter she killed while escaping from slavery. (“Beloved” was all she could afford to have engraved on her daughter’s tombstone.) The novel explores the psychological effects of slavery and the repression of painful memories as well as the nature of mother-daughter relationships.



4

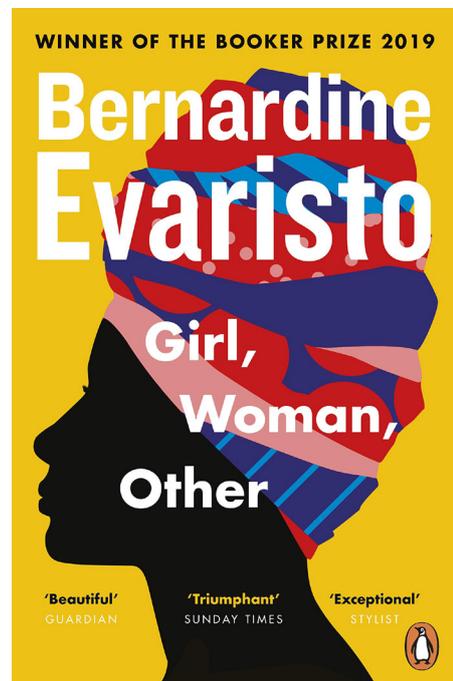


GIRL, WOMAN, OTHER

BY BERNARDINE EVARISTO

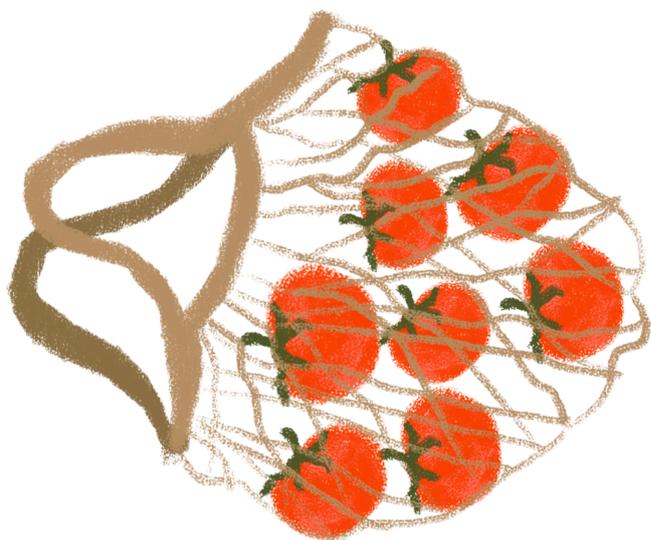
“you see, Megan, I learnt first hand how women are discriminated against, which is why I became a feminist after I’d transitioned, an intersectional feminist, because it’s not just about gender but race, sexuality, class and other intersections which we mostly unthinkingly live anyway”

The novel follows the lives of 12 intertwined characters in the UK over several decades. Each character is given their own chapter, with their lives – sometimes closely, sometimes loosely – linked with the other womxn of the book. Intersectionality is explored in the novel through race, sexuality, gender, history and economic stratification which define the experiences of the womxn in the novel. Though each character experiences different forms of oppression, be it because of race, class or social standing, many of the characters other each other. This builds the complexity of the 12 characters, allowing the reader to sincerely relate to each character on a humanistic level, rather than reducing character’s to stereotypes.



SUSTAINABLE EATING

WORDS BY VERITY PHILLIPS @VERITY_PHILLIPS, ILLUSTRATION BY ELLA LAMBIO @ELLA.LAMBIO



HOW TO EAT IN SUSTAINABLY

1. **Eat more plants.** Simply, this will benefit both our bodies and the planet.
2. **Eat in season & eat local.** Try to buy foods that are grown locally wherever possible - if you are eating asparagus and strawberries in December, they will have been flown in from elsewhere. Look up a seasonality calendar online for more tips!
3. **Eat sustainable fish.** Look for a blue MSC label if shopping in a supermarket - this means you're supporting well-managed, sustainable fisheries.
4. **Eat well-sourced meat.** Although you'll see a cost shift, buying from a butcher will near-enough guarantee you are getting well-sourced meat from ethical producers. Similarly, don't shy away from the non-popular cuts: beef shin, for example (when cooked low and slow it's ultra-tender).
5. **Eat it all.** Do not waste food. Freeze fresh items that you're not sure you'll get round to eating; bulk-cook recipes and aim to roughly plan what you'll eat each week. If you do have to throw out food, get a compost/food bin to dispose of it sustainably.
6. **Eat plastic-free.** More info on this below!
7. **Eat your own!** Whether you have a garden, balcony or just a window box, aim to grow some vegetables. Herbs are particularly easy to grow and maintain.

HOW TO CUT-DOWN ON PLASTIC

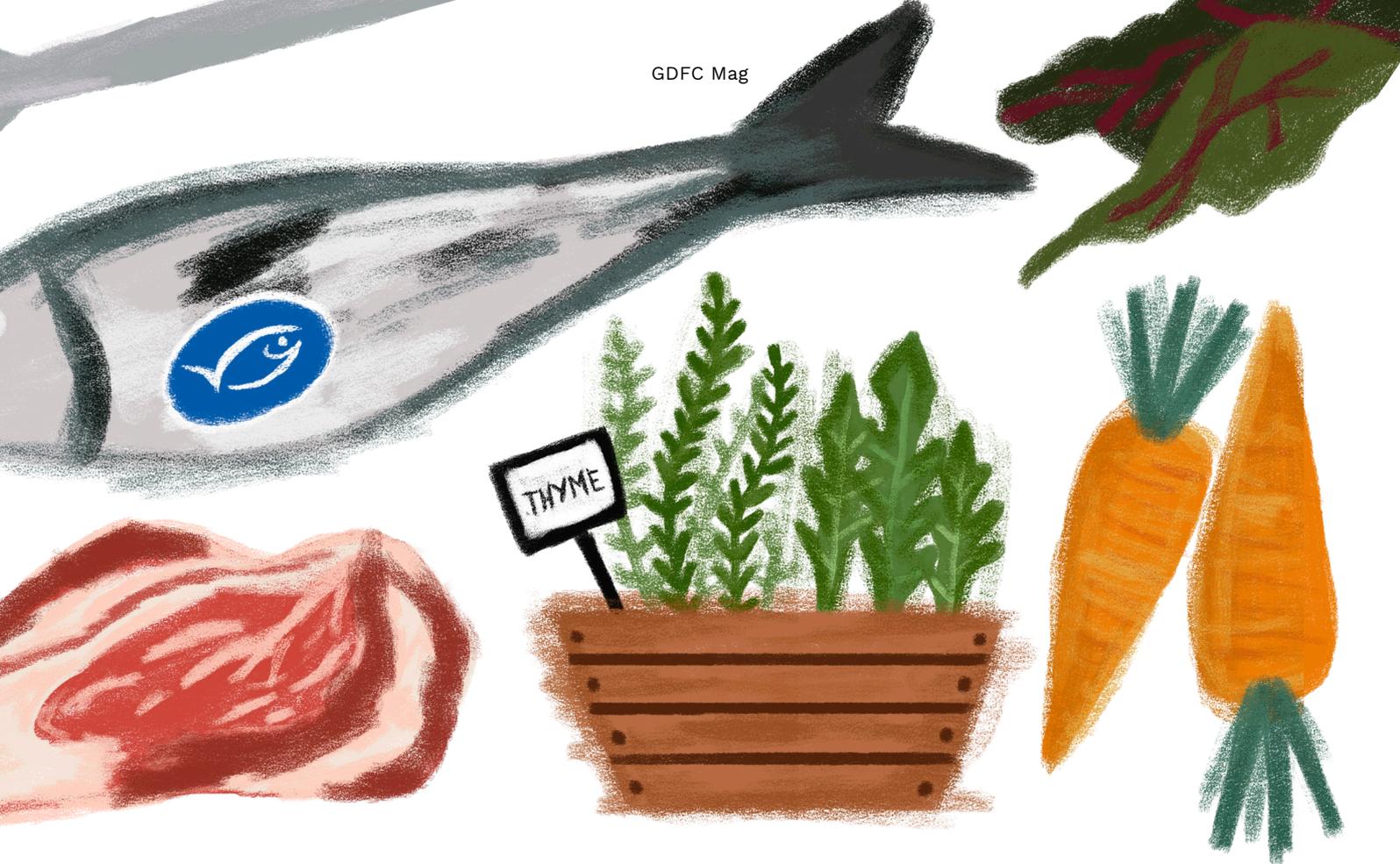
Home food deliveries are extremely convenient, but the amount of plastic that comes with them is staggering. We are lucky enough in London to have access to several no-plastic supermarkets. Here are just a few:

- **Gather** (Peckham)
- **Get Loose** (Hackney City Farm)
- **Bulk Market** (Hackney Central)
- **Harmless Store** (Crouch End)

How it works: BYO Containers (or take and keep the containers from your first visit to the store refill next time you go). Everything is priced by weight when you pay.

Every year, a huge amount of farm-fresh, ready to eat fruit and vegetables will go to waste for not meeting supermarket standards, generally due to not looking the way consumers expect them to. Some companies have boxed these up and will deliver them straight to your door. Here are just a few:

- **Odd Box** - From £9.45 a box, including six to seven varieties of seasonal vegetables that would otherwise go to waste.
- **Riverford** - From £11.75 a box, including seven varieties of seasonal veg and staples
- **Abel & Cole** - From £11.50, including five seasonal vegetables and two types of fruits



HOW TO EAT OUT SUSTAINABLY

Generally speaking, the independent London restaurant scene has a mindful eye on sustainability. However there are some eateries going above and beyond to fight the battle on food waste and the environment, as well as paying their staff and suppliers fairly. Here are just a few:

Cook Daily – Box Park Shoreditch (£)

Cook Daily's approach to vegan food extricates popularity from a predominantly white, wellness-oriented mainstream.

"It's true that when people think of veganism, they think of white, middle-class and we are changing that. It is what it is and it's been like that for a long time [...] I'm doing something about it."

Chef King Cook's next-level tasty, low-waste vegan food has also always been served in recyclable bowls, with recyclable cutlery to boot.

The Duke of Cambridge – Islington (££)

Britain's first certified organic pub, with a focus on ethical and sustainable business principals. They ensure a fair deal for all: suppliers, staff, customers and the planet.

"We're an organic certified pub and restaurant in Islington, London, serving seasonal, ethically grown food using the freshest ingredients from our favourite growers and farmers. Grass-

reared meat and sustainable fish are on the daily changing menu but organic veg is the star of every plate.'

Silo – Hackney Wick (£££)

Innovative zero-waste restaurant above Crate Brewery, overlooking the canal. The crockery's made from recycled glass; the dining counters are all upcycled plastic; even the lampshades are made from a kind of mushroom. Any food that isn't consumed by customers is fed into their aerobic digester and turned into compost within 24 hours.

Nest – Homerton (£££)

Intimate dining experience for a special occasion. Specialising in seasonal tasting menus that, to avoid waste, use only one meat at a time for the whole menu. For vegetarian guests, there are periods across the year which are dedicated to British vegetables, using no meat or fish for that particular menu.

RECIPE

VEGAN JAP CHAE

WORDS AND PHOTOS BY VERITY PHILLIPS @VERITY_PHILLIPS

FLAVOURFUL NOODLES, PACKED WITH VEG, A PERFECT ADDITION TO A BBQ, POTLUCK OR PICNIC. SERVES 4 AS A MAIN, 8 AS A SIDE.

INGREDIENTS

- 10oz cellophane or sweet potato noodles* (or any noodles)
- 2 tbsp. neutral oil
- 1 medium red onion (sliced)
- 1 red pepper (sliced)
- 2 medium carrots (julienned: thinly sliced, think 2-inch match sticks, don't worry if they are different sizes)
- 2 cups sliced mushrooms
- 1 -2 cups shredded cabbage (half a small cabbage)
- 2 cups frozen peeled edamame (defrosted according to package)*
- 4 cloves minced garlic
- 1-inch minced ginger
- 1 chilli (if you can take the heat)
- ¼ cup mirin (or white wine vinegar)

Sauce:

- ½ cup light soy sauce
- 2 tbsp sugar
- 1 ½ tbsp sesame oil

Garnish:

- 3 tbsp toasted sesame seeds (if they aren't toasted pop them in a pan on medium heat for a few minutes. Keep an eye on them - they burn quickly)

- ¼ cup chopped and roasted peanuts

- 3 spring onions (sliced)

- Sriracha

*Longdan Supermarket in Shoreditch have a great noodle selection. You can also find frozen edamame here.

METHOD

1. Put a big pot of water on to boil, cook your noodles according to package directions. Drain and rinse a few times in cold water. If they are really long use scissors to cut into manageable pieces.
2. Heat the oil on medium heat then add the onion, pepper, mushrooms, and carrots. Cook for 4 minutes until softened with a bit of crunch. Add in the cabbage, garlic, chili and ginger and cook until soft and lightly caramelized - approximately 10 minutes longer.
3. Deglaze the pan with the mirin (white wine vinegar is a solid substitute). Use a spatula to scrape pieces from the bottom of your pan and stir in your edamame.
4. Mix the vegetables and noodles into a big bowl or pot, stir in the soy sauce, sugar, sesame oil and half your sesame seeds. Add salt and pepper to taste.
5. Garnish with the remaining sesame seeds, peanuts, spring onion and sriracha. Serve at room temperature.



THE VENTRILOCRISP

CHEETOS CHEESE FLAVOUR FOOTBALLS

WORDS BY EMMA MAGNUS @THEVENTRILOCRISP, ILLUSTRATION BY LILY GRANT @LILYROSEGRANT_ART

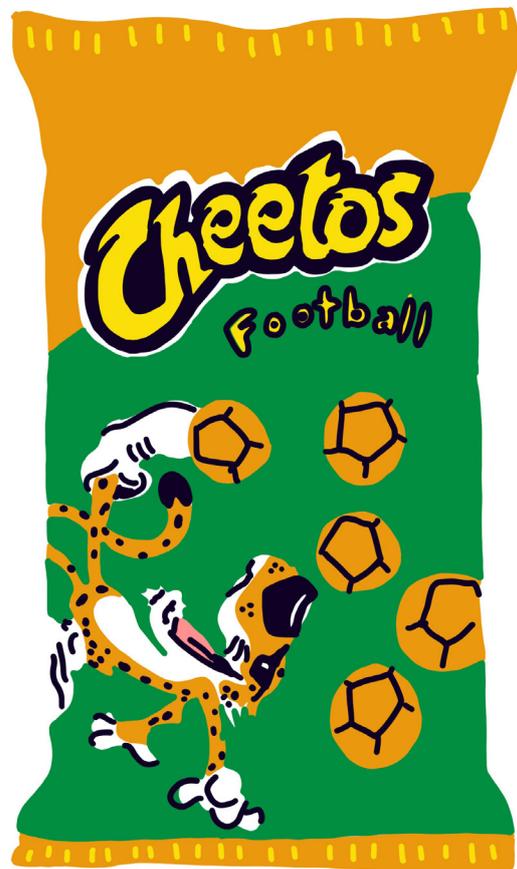
When the Ventrilocrisp was 6, its teacher asked its worst quality. It replied sinisterly: my temper.

There remains much in the world about which to protest, from vast inequality to lengthy personal resentments (its enemy neighbour who must sorely pay; downloading the work authenticator app onto its phone). Thankfully, the Ventrilocrisp's hard, residual anger has softened during furlough. In its step there is a new lightness. A neighbour said it looked happy. Yet some weeks ago, it felt the old red rage return, swift and all-consuming.

What happened was this: a man in the park interrupted the Ventrilocrisp's football session offering bad unsolicited advice. This he delivered as if to a child, not listening to a word the Ventrilocrisp and its companion said. The man's own ball control was poor and his suggestions were stupid (play 'one bounce rush'). The Ventrilocrisp and Leah Kahn were twice the athletes this man would ever be. Afterwards, the Ventrilocrisp cursed itself for giving him its time. For time, after all, is money. Why, the Ventrilocrisp grumbled bitterly, did this man feel he had the right and qualification to critique their well-considered practice?

After this lengthy prelude, onto the crisp. It had high hopes for the footballs, expecting a specimen, like the beautiful game itself, with mass appeal. Cheetos know their cheese flavour, it mused. So let's sit back and enjoy the ride.

This was the beginning of a series of disappointments. Firstly, the footballs are drier and smaller than anticipated: roughly the diameter of a one pence piece. Their hexagonal markings carry the ominous suggestion of violence, seeping crimson like blood through to the puff's orange skin. The promised cheese flavour was scarcely to be found, hijacked by a strong taste of bacon. Alarm bells began to ring:



the taste was suspiciously meaty for a cheese puff. It turned over the packet. There it was: contains beef. Vegetarian Ventrilocrisp, cruelly poisoned! It spat the crisp out in disgust.

The reformed Ventrilocrisp would not make the same mistake twice. It threw the crisps in the bin (read: gave them away). Time is money. And the simplest form of protest here is to deny these treacherous crisps its precious time.

AGONY AUNT

ADVICE BY ALICE MAY WILLIAMS @_MAY_WILLIAMS AND EMILY COUSENS @COUSENSE

Hi Agony aunts (asking for a friend),
This friend has developed a little (big) crush on their friend. They think the feeling is mutual but aren't sure. They also don't want to risk the friendship and know it could be complicated if it doesn't work out. What do you think they should do?

A friend, huh? Well you're a very good friend ;) to reach out to aunt on their behalf...

Before I give you some honest advice, it might be worth turning to the one and only James Hunter, 'a voice not known only for its natural beauty and grit, but for its honesty' (jameshuntermusic.com). In his wise words, 'no one's calling you a liar but/ There's no smoke without fire'. I always think of this when trying to work out whether someone is flirting with me. When is a coffee on the house a subtly coded request for a date? Always! (Aunt is very desired.)

But what is the source of this smoke, your wise aunt wonders? Is it the signals your friend is getting? Has there been a change in the relationship? Were they ever really just friends? I think this friend needs to dig deep and ask themselves whether the attraction has been there all along?

Anyway, what use is a friendship with someone you have a crush on? It sounds to aunt like a recipe for tortured tales of drawn out dates and unfulfilled fantasies. Not that aunt has ever had any such problems! Oh no. But I have watched enough Love Island in my time to know that 'friendships' like these often involve unrequited love.

It sounds at the moment like this friend is asking the wrong question. What's the worst thing that can happen if I do make my feelings clear? The friendship is risked. But what about the other question? What's the worst thing that can happen if I don't make my feelings clear? You'll forever remain uncoupled on the island, fanny flutters (which are available to all) out of control while your friend cracks on with someone entirely uneligible.

Avril Lavigne (Skater Queen) did say, 'why do you have to do and make things so complicated?' But that was because she only liked going for drives with her beau and was probably confused about her sexuality. It sounds as if you like their whole personality and won't be your friend anyway if your crush means you are unable to be happy for other romances in their life.

Good friendships rely on honesty. So go on. Tell the truth. (But not at Christmas, not outside their door, and not on big white cards).

First/unrequited love returns after many years and this person is confused. What could this person want? When is it okay to entertain the idea of long lost exes?

As Xena Warrior Princess once said to her 'companion' Gabrielle: "I need you to look inside yourself and find the womxn you once were. I'm asking you to do this because I want you to reflect on how far you've come, how little you resemble that person who fell unrequitedly in love with their friend." I don't have many details of your dilemma but I'm guessing that you've had other loves since your 'first, unrequited love'. Perhaps you've built another life and brought yourself up to be a strong and confident person? As a member of Goal Diggers, I'm also sure you've met literally HUNDREDS OF OTHER QUEERS?!

So ask yourself, does this new boss version of you really need these crumbs of attention from somebody who didn't return your feelings initially? We've all been there, pal! I myself fell unrequitedly in love with my best friend. Curled up together watching Home Alone, I thought, 'I wish I could stay right here forever!' I was eight. Throughout our teenage years, we were inseparable. As the less confident one, I followed her lead on everything. I played football because she did, I watched Xena every day BECAUSE SHE INSISTED WE DID. She hid the video tapes under her bed, worried her mum would assume the worst. Alas dear reader, despite all the signals, she turned out to be straight. I turned out to be a lesbian who still remembers Xena quotes 21 years later.

The point is: we love, we lose, we learn and we live on. You have come far and this emotional turbulence may feel exciting, what you are experiencing is a repetition of a past dynamic. The butterflies in your tummy are remembering how you used to feel. I wonder if you met with them now as your older, wiser self, would they still seem so alluring? I can't tell you why your friend has suddenly shown this flirtatious interest in you. It has been a long lockdown. Perhaps, they are looking for a little frisson, attention and excitement? If it is anything more, and they took your feelings seriously (I presume you professed your love prior), they should openly express how they feel.

I bet you are currently consumed by an overwhelming desire to KNOW how this person really feels about you. You need to refocus your thoughts on how you feel about them, their past and current treatment of you. We can't always understand the behaviours of others. Often, these people don't even understand it themselves. You can however examine carefully your own feelings and a course of action which puts protecting yourself at the centre.

GDFC CRUSH

ILLUSTRATION BY LILY GRANT @LILYROSEGRANT_ART



Estrella (like the beer).

Pitch 2, Clapham Common, 10am. You're tiny in the enormous goal. But when the ball whips towards you, you pounce like a cat, lifting yourself from the mud and the dead earth and into the corners, catching the ball triumphantly in your hands. Jumping up into a league of your own.

From the parched, cracked September ground to the icy blades of January to the wet puddles of March, you stand between the sticks. Leaping, diving and digging deep.

I have heard rivals from other teams admire your safe hands. To them I smile, safe in the knowledge that you're behind me, behind us all. Keeping the goal in Goal Diggers.

Always a fan.

Chloe Morgan,

I heard you're a keeper. Well don't keep me waiting. From now on, I'll be the first to volunteer for my stint in goal and the last to take the gloves off. I know you're meant to aim top right or top left but if you're in goal, I'll aim right for the heart <3

Lily Grant,

You draw so well, let me be your muse. Let's act out the Titanic. I'll play Rose. Lily, I want you to draw me like one of your peachy bum girls.

Ode to a Sweet Chilli Sensation

Emma Magnus, queen of crispus,

You make my heart hula hoop

But wotsit to you if I even exist?

Every time you look at me I'm

Frazzled

My skin starts to Pringle

I keep kettle-chipping away at the distance between us but

All you say is doritno.

Coach Josh,

I may be gay but there is nothing I'd rather do than stare at your tight tuchus on a sunny morning on Clapham Common. Keep wearing those bun hugging leggings and I might have to switch teams ;)

Georgia Bruce,

O captain of my heart, all I think a-boat is you and your paddle. Let's wave goodbye to the shore and float away. Can I barge my way aboard your loveboat?

- Seasick for your love

HOT DATES WITH HOT PEOPLE

HOW TO MAKE YOUR DREAMS COME TRUE IN THE MIDST OF A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

WORDS AND PHOTOS BY GEORGIA BRUCE @GEORGIAFBRUCE, GRACE WYLD @GWYLD AND LAMORNA ASH @LAMORNAASH

As lockdown trudged onwards and the pandemic forced us all into its deepest isolation, Lamorna, Grace and I were sitting, socially bubbled in our North London flat on top of a dry cleaner (now defunct). The evening wore slowly on and ghosts of Friday nights past were whispering in our ears, reminding us of all we were missing out on. We were longing for excitement, for romance, for fit vibes with fit people. In short, we were feeling kind of lonely. So, we did literally the only thing we could have done on a Friday night in the middle of a pandemic, and we gifted each other our perfect evening: our dream dates with our dream people. Here's how they went down.



Céline took me to the opening of a new exhibition in Bushwick, Brooklyn. She'd emailed me to say she was flying into JFK from Paris and told me to meet her there - she'd pay for my flight. At the exhibition, I could tell she cared little for the art around us. She took a long drag on her cigarette as we stood, bathed in the neon light of the no smoking sign, then she took my hand and led me out into the New York night. She was gone by the time I woke up. On the bedside table lay a note: 'Chère Georgia. I want you to move into my penthouse apartment in downtown Paris with me. It has Portrait of a Lady on Fire projected on the wall at all times and there's nice exposed wood flooring which I know is an aesthetic you aspire to. Je t'adore. Céline.'

There was no going back. Hank knew it. I knew it. All there was before us now was the open road, the open sky and the two freshly opened beers Hank had taken from behind the bar in that last sleazy motel. We'd left there in a hurry. Hank was always in a hurry. It was what I liked most about him: he knew life was short, and if we didn't mine it for every goddamn beautiful moment, then what the hell was the point? With one hand on the wheel and one on my thigh, it was like all the power from that 1960s Cadillac was coursing right through the both of us. We could do anything, be anything. The world was ours.

On our first date Héctor flew us out to his favourite restaurant in the hills outside Barcelona on his private jet. We haven't got away on holiday much since, but I do love watching him from the bench. The way his curtains flop to one side as he headers that ball into the back of the net gives me chills right down into my red leather boots. Sure, we haven't been to the Maldives since the end of last season, and I'd like to have him to myself, but nothing quite beats the thrill of watching him take his shirt off in front of 60,000 Arsenal fans.



HOROSCOPES WITH SERAPHIC STASI

WORDS AND ILLUSTRATIONS BY ANASTASIA KUCHTA @ANASTASIAKUCHTA



ARIES

Mars retrograde in Aries (September 9 - November 1). You may feel stuck and frustrated. Try to take as much time for yourself as possible. Many Aries will see employment issues arise in the coming months, but this is a blessing in disguise as you may decide to radically change what you want to do.



TAURUS

With Uranus in retrograde in Taurus (August 15 - January 1) your vision about the future is radically different than before, and you can experience changes that seem terrifying only because they are unknown. You will benefit from changing both your daily work and exercise routine, which will find greater levels of success than in previous years.



GEMINI

Mars is next to Lilith (June 18 - October 20) causing trouble in both personal and work associations and collaborations. This will pass by the end of the year, when you will find new career paths that will bring you greater satisfaction.



CANCER

Love and romance rule your life in 2020. The period when Mars, the master of Cancer's love house, is in retrograde (September 9 - November 13) will be a critical, and trying time for you. You must be ready to learn lessons from your relationships.



LEO

When Mars is in retrograde (September 9 - November 13) you may encounter problems managing your emotions constructively. You must stop trying to control others. Being reserved is the key to all your problems.



VIRGO

Jupiter and Uranus unite their efforts with Saturn to help Virgos. Your attempts to develop professionally will finally get rewarded. Great financial changes will occur, supporting the plan Virgos made in the previous year.



LIBRA

Mercury retrograde for Libra (October 14 - November 3) brings a period of emotional imbalance and denial. Now is the moment to learn how to make peace with the things you can't change and to overcome them.



SCORPIO

When Mars is in retrograde (September 9 - November 13) you may feel overwhelmed and exhausted because are unable to fulfill tasks. Minor tensions can occur under the influence of Mercury (October 14 - November 3). To prevent these, quit being sarcastic and ironic during these three weeks.



SAGITTARIUS

With Mercury retrograde (October 14 - November 3) you will finally be able to travel. You should still avoid long trips and take precautionary measures, as Saturn's influence will create security concerns.



CAPRICORN

Pluto is in retrograde (April 26 - October 5) in Capricorn. This time will be rich in revelations, inner transformations, significant changes in beliefs, attitudes. For the more spiritually evolved, these transformations will seem natural. The more pragmatic will find this time difficult, but unpleasant events may trigger spiritual awakening.



AQUARIUS

Jupiter is in retrograde motion (May 15 - September 13) and will lead you to reevaluate your relationships. You are used to being always right, but if you work to build safety in your relationships, you will get rewarded by another response that gives you satisfaction.



PISCES

Neptune will be retrograde in Pisces (June 23 - November 29) which will require you to focus more on your inner self. Neptune retrograde also represents the reconnection with your extrasensory capacities. Your clairvoyance gets activated, and you will become energetically receptive.



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