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SATURDAY
4TH
FEBRUARY

Issy Wood
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Idris Elba once said, 'Women fall in love with what they hear, and men fall in love with what they see. This is why women will always wear makeup and men will always lie.'


During the early hours of Saturday, I dream I'm being beaten to death by the artist I used to work for. 'Your work has no staying power!' she screams, punching me in the stomach with a mallet, breaking all my ribs. I wake in what I assume is a pool of blood, but come to and realise it's just sweat. I also know what the beating was for – in the dream I had told the press that this artist had sold her soul to Hauser and Wirth after preaching to me for years the perils of the mega gallery. Which is true, and it's why the violence felt so real. My psychiatrist warned me that the dreams would get worse when I decreased my antidepressant dose. The dam between my worst thoughts and the logic that keeps them in check has begun to break. I write to the psychiatrist, 'Overall fairly painless, dizziness for two days, dreams are horrendous, but I enjoy waking and realising they're not real.'


Three daily FaceTimes with A. The first in which he tells the story of how he found out he had testicular cancer while at a bachelor party in New Orleans. He told several strippers his problems. His friends pleaded with him not to ruin the weekend for the groom, his childhood friend.

On the second FaceTime, he sings Frank Sinatra to me.

The third is us largely sitting in silence, staring at one another on our respective screens. Going to bed at 2am each night combined with whatever my brain is doing to cope with fewer SSRIs is killing me. I promise myself I'll set an alarm for midnight and tell A this is all we have time for. I tell him about the pool of blood thing, but omit the dream from Thursday in which W is trying to finger me at the Standard hotel.

Also, perhaps attributable to the Zoloft, is a humming throbbing anger preprogrammed into every exchange with collaborators. MIDI anger, if you will. Towards the end of the week I am prepared to fly to San Diego, where my drummer is holidaying, to take






a broken wine bottle to his neck. He is proficient with hi-hats but painfully useless with the bureaucracy of form-filling. He takes two weeks to fill out a small questionnaire for his US visa and, when he finally produces it, vetoes several potential rehearsal days because he is running an ultra marathon. Then there is W, who keeps promising me things he can't deliver, citing a 'crazy couple of weeks' when I press him. I no longer press him. My texts go to green anyway, and it reminds me of Ronson and I want to punch a wall. I just know when he decides it is time for me to fulfil my side of the bargain and gift him a large painting, he will be pissed that I'm not willing to organise a viewing within 24 hours, or around his busy schedule working (for some reason) with George Clooney. Then there is E who made me a music video for a song I now despise and it's not quite what I expected, nor what we discussed on the phone a million times. We are over budget and over deadline. E says the editor she hired has been on a drugs bender, spending time with a white rapper who once sent me a photo of himself topless and told me he beat up a deaf rapist. It's a bad week for collaboration. I take more elongated breaths than I have in a long time.

Before all of this, F asks to hang out and so I invite him to my studio, where we first met. He doesn't ask to bring somebody with him but he does anyway: a young and painfully thin girl with an ambiguous accent and a giant boob job. Giant, at least, compared with her minuscule frame. She is dating an Egyptian entrepreneur. I ask for details and she says, 'He is making gyms for poor—.....for the lower class—..... he's building affordable gyms.' I haven't seen F since the wedding we both attended in 2022. I am proud to say I have never exploited my friendship with him for inside gossip about the Kardashians, with whom he is close friends. However, Kendall Jenner recently bought a work of mine and I am honest with F about her being the only one I would ever be comfortable selling my wares to. Except Caitlyn, because there's something quite special about a trans woman who opposes gay marriage.

Despite my fatigue, I work a lot. I wade painfully through music. I make a rule that I am not allowed to start a new Ableton Live file until I have completed the three songs I already started and which show promise. It could even be good if I can get my shit together. I break the rule immediately. I buy





a Louis CK poster. I do an interview with Cultured magazine for fashion week talking about how much I hate fashion week. 'When did you first develop a dress sense?' asks the woman on the phone. I say, 'I'll let you know.'

