

SUZI:THE CROWN PRINCESS

–Lex would be wandering around the living room in his black bikini briefs and he'd be lecturing me about the world.

She told the stories so well. It was only days ago. Or just a few years at best. But she made it sound like the tale of the ages. And I tried to relate to this ancient history. It seemed to give the form of the present. All the adventures that formed a part of her mythology.

–This is all real. The magic was real.

And she saved her fondest elegies for Guy as if he was already departed.

–He was a guru. He was a con artist.

–What do you mean?

–He had a host of followers. He transmitted the germ to everyone. He'd lead them on acid trips. Give them the road map and guide them through the twist and turns.

I was still trying to imagine Lex four years ago giving a refuge to the thirteen year old Suzi. Now she was talking about Guy. And for her, the story was often told with sexual imagery. And I wondered about Guy or Claude and how they really fit in. She described Claude and his flowing locks. Such lyric that might be squandered on the young Shelly and Keats. Claude was our poet incarnate. And every girl wanted to get close to him.

For once, I began to understand the revolution of these planets. Every girl on the scene looked at Claude and started to assume an orbit around his sun. Some were drawn up close. The others longed from a distance. And for the moment, he seemed to be the source. What made it all go. Even as I talked to Suzi or Alea or some other goddess, she herself gave up her divinity to someone more stellar than her. But there was more to it than that. The raging flames that surrounded Claude were really so weak in comparison to Guy. And anyone who knew him would attest to the same thing. It was most significant that Suzi offered her testimony to his enormous legacy. Even as Suzi was beginning to rival Thea or KÉ, she revealed that there was a deeper understanding that had little to do with her. And all that tutelage from Guy had resulted in this new order. Observed it. I embrace it.

I supposed that KÉ had never had such guidance. But the rumors seemed to confirm that Guy had even drawn KÉ into his web. How many nights and how many kisses would he need to convince her to surrender her world to him? Ultimately, he would offer her an asceticism. That seemed like such a contradiction in a world ruled by her hedonism.

All that was gossip. And Suzi was gracing me with her presence. So I listened to her intently. I made mental notes. And she even watched me as I pulled out folded sheets of paper and drew some diagrams.

–What is that?

–Something for my work.

She dazzled with her thrift store dress. It had an elegant shine. As she pranced around Lucky's, I felt that she was the belle of the ball. A true crown princess. And when she would become queen, everything would change.

It seemed in her interest to forge a quick alliance with Boy KÉ. This put her in the perfect position to assume the monarchy when KÉ was forced to abdicate. Something about Suzi made her seem like a natural. But at other times, she seemed so distracted and hardly ready to

assume this central role.

There was a lovely grace in her movements. But she had none of the sweep of KÉ. Try as she might, she would have a hard time replacing Suzi's magic seemed elsewhere. There was almost an aspect of wile in her manners. She made men aware of her in the most provocative way. And just when she would seem so formidable, she would retreat to a vague past, the supposedly innocent thirteen year old.

–Even at thirteen, she had a sexual knowledge that would embarrass many married women.

She conveyed an origin. But she really seemed to have no real roots. This made it all seem more fantastic. Just when she became lost in these mazes of jealousy and intrigue, she again became the child princess.

–Is she always going to be like this?

–I wonder!

A DISTRACTION

–I've noticed you staring at me all night. Now you're writing something on an index card. What are you writing about me?

–I'm sorry to bother you. I wasn't even looking your way. There was a girl standing next to you. I think it's someone I know. And I had an idea for a song. So I wrote it down.

–You didn't write anything down about me.

–Not at all.

I don't even know who he is. He is trying to work his way into my story. As the new blood eclipses Thea and KÉ, he thinks it's his opportunity. He has no connections to the existing actors. Where does he come in?

–I could be a foil for KÉ.

–George is taking her out of the action.

I was shopping one night, and I saw George. He gave me a friendly handshake.

–KÉ doesn't like to come out very much.

It was wild that she has ended up with him. He was so stable. Quite a change from the revolving nights and changing moods of KÉ. I wonder if there was a tragedy in such a resolution. I can hardly think so. But the sun seemed to shine with less intensity. Can she be replaced? I always saw her as this infinite potential. Even her imitators saw her in quite the same way. But the desire was fading. And her fans have assumed their own roles. Some may wonder about the disappearance of the Olympians. Did they ever walk on air?

GOSSIP

LYING

–Are you going to tell me what I want to hear? If you don't, I'm going to have to beat you.

–What do you have in the desk?

–Nothing

I know that you took the pen.

Did you take the missing money?

I missed going in to work.

There's a pattern here.

I'm trying to escape my life.

Staying late to clean up.

I'm your friend.

GOSSIP

change the words to benefit the upstanding.

I'm still standing.

MORE SUZI

There was a gentleness in her presence. Her sparkle was overwhelming. She became whatever guys wanted her to be. She could just as easily transform from forlorn waif to punk princess. Everyone seemed to marvel at her social grace because she herself was so dazzled by the surrounding nightlife. That may have been her weakness. She found herself seduced by the most belligerent newcomers who she would proclaim as the new salvation for our prolonged moments of boredom.

–The only thing that separates these guys from being homeless is their supposedly cool apparel. Give them a chance to stay at your place, and they will steal everything. She hated to be reminded of this truth about her new messiahs.

Suzi was really our first heroine who I had a chance to become close to. From early on, she granted me a conversational intimacy. It was as if I was appointed biographer. Unlike KÉ, Suzi could disappear for weeks at a time and things would go on as if they had nothing to do with her. Then she would reappear at the center of things as if she had been there all along.

Suzi would play her innocence to the point of encouraging male aggression. Then she would delicately assume the role of the wounded lamb. Oh poor dear! At times she seemed infinitely wiser than her 17 years. On other occasions, she would revert to infancy and radiate all the ambiguity of the point of creation.

Tonight's prospect was Stax.

–Where did you get him from?

–I think that he's cute.

–He's a clown. His brain is an empty attic with rats running around looking for food.

–Is that the best image that you can muster?

–I'm trying? That's a lot more than can be said for your boy genius.

–He's cute. I like his Mohawk.

Last time it was his pony tail. Any new distraction.

–Do regret something about the night?
 –Do you want my phone number?
 My heart was beating fast.

Where can I leave the tip?

a real price tag
 100, 000 dollars for the
 how much for the hand movement.
 promote this hierarchy of value in very strict terms

100,000 grand
 even more subject to her variations

straddle that line

a manifestation of my imagination
 the poster
 not the source
 why does she resist her only reaction to the celebrity Crucial
 “I want to be in your next flyer

If she could only survived as this wisp. Suzi was the purity of going out as if she had no other existence. This was not like KÉ with her dance or Thea with her mysticism. Suzi implied a supernatural of the here and now.

I want to be able to touch each and every one.

$$\sum_{i=1}^n \textcircled{S}_i$$

A(\textcircled{S}) I want to be able to touch.

Every one wants to be touched by someone. Getting caught in the socialization. Some \textcircled{S} works its way through the weave and is touched by its counterpart. Then it moves on to another position and the same thing follows.

Give \textcircled{S} a name.
 For \textcircled{S} , a \textcircled{H} .

A MATCHED PAIR

\textcircled{S}_i	\textcircled{H}_i
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She moves on in the weave.

(S) _i	(H) _{i+1}
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–I don't think that he really liked me.
 –Did you have final words?
 –I didn't need to.
By thinking about her I reminded myself of our time together.

The overly dramatic illusion that his touch will change her life.

He is sort of cute.	(S) ₀
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She started the process.
 –Give me a drink.
 She believed that she was getting closer to what she wanted.
–I can help you prolong that feeling.

(S) ₀	¢
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She really didn't need any help. Her excitement was enough to get her going. The roller coaster was moving faster than she could control. She could sense that ominous dip that awaited her. But nothing could prepare her for the upcoming excitement.

She screamed.

She follows her way along the weave. She is breathless.

(H) ₀	(H) ₁	...	(H) _i	(H) _{i+1}	
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–Isn't anyone going to come up and talk to me?

I'm really not going to stay with you. I just thought that we'd have a little fun

She felt an emptiness in her bed. But she let it slide. It was just the alcohol talking. In a few minutes, he would be gone for good, and she wouldn't give it a second thought. She hated to think about things that way. She didn't want to become callous.

She kept telling herself that things were all going to get better. In the morning she reminded herself of as much. Her hangover made it tough to get stable. But she righted herself the best that she could.
 it's all going to get better

Calls me over
 recognize from the posters

Christine

ANY OTHER NAME

Aileen

could be someone from another time

the new style contract...Sandra

THE NEW STYLE CONTRACT

Sandra wanted to convince herself that the world was held together by an invisible thread. It was certain. There could be no doubt

–Pick the wrong guy and the world is just going to crumble.

–Your world?

She was right. We'd all seen it happen. It happened every night. Unlike Sandra, we were all in turmoil.

–I'm not going to take a guy home after one night. I have to check out his pedigree.

It didn't make complete sense to me. After all, what was left to know after the rigorous routine of Lucky's and Restless. But I took Sandra at her word. I was ready to see her with pen in hand getting Mr. Wonderful to sign her well-prepared contract.

–Sign here. And here. And here!

I wasn't making fun of her. Not really. Someone had to do something to resist these scoundrels. It just seemed to make things a lot less interesting. It was like shopping for an investment counselor.

Sandra's evident appeal was so much linked to the craft of her offer. And every man would need to understand how reasonable was this surmountable hurdle. This was hardly the kind of challenge that KÉ had placed before her suitors. So Sandra needed to be forgiven for her graceful *faux pas*. After all, it was not ballet.

In spite of her charm, there was something particularly fastidious in her manner. Any lover would have to prepare himself for this challenge. This was meant to be the welcome side of her routine. But none of that diminished the seductive manner in which she unveiled her method. Sure there was a little madness in it all. That was the intent. How else could she ensnare the perfect prey. Once she made the catch, she didn't want to have to throw him back. That was the source of her care.

Sure the new style contract might seem a little stodgy. It sort of took the appeal out of the game. The risk was built into the wonderful moment when you never knew what might happened. But Sandra didn't not want to balance her fate on the shifting sands of time. And so she built a monument to her own desire. And she worshiped at this monolith. Such was her devotion.

–Let this be a lesson for everyone else out there.

How long would they take to learn the lesson? What if, after all the work, the result was exactly the same? The lovely boy was able to pass all the tests. Some of the tests took years. But then he turned out to be the same cad as before. He was just good at standardized testing.

I knew that my review demanded a more exacting toll than Sandra's. I was the author, and I feared losing my access to the *Paradise*. Sandra was still in the midst of creating her transcendent vision.

–I guess that's one way out of this mess.

There was no need for a Phase 3 to bring her closer to an ultimate resolution. The proof was in the making!

–When we ran the numbers, we discovered a *flaw* in the accounting procedure.

–The flaw wasn't in the accounting; it was in the *running* of the numbers.

Indeed, there was some kind of flaw in the accounting. It made everything seem out of joint.

–I don't know if we can fix it.

–We can fix it in the numbers.

–*Do you recognize her?*

She made every effort to be recognized. She had refashioned her body for a moment such as this. It was as if she molded the flesh from clay. And with the crafting, she got rid of a forgotten history. Everything that she wanted to leave behind just fell by the wayside so that she could emerge in this new form. There was an intensity in her new image as the muscles clung to the bone. The lines were hard and sharp. There was still a tenderness when she smiled. But otherwise, she gave herself over to the intensity of her regimen. She couldn't let up. Once she had escaped the ghosts of her past, she didn't want them to return and mess up the serenity that she had established for herself.

This perfection had no seams. There was little access to her previous self. It had simply offered her the raw material for the making over. The least clue could be her undoing. So there was an extreme vigilance in her walk. She was not going to let up.

When she moved on the dance floor she exhibited her confidence. Even standing in place, there was the same dynamic. She seemed to pull everything around here. The attraction was so severe. Guys tried to mimic that vitality that she exuded. But they really had none of the assurance that possessed her. She drew a crowd. But everyone seemed somewhat hindered compared to the liberty that she possessed.

Everything that she was reminder of how conscientiously she had worked to transform herself. As she caught the waves of the music, I worked to follow her lead. And the two of us appeared to ride the same wave. The casual

\bar{O}	Do you know her name?
$d' f(t) = -f(t)$	It's time to leave!
$\bar{O}(t) = -\beta f(t)$	I can't leave yet.
$\Lambda(\$) = \bar{O}/Q$	THE PAYOFF.

$P^N = \bar{O}$	I can imagine her next to me. It is real!
$P^N = \Lambda(\$)$	GREAT!
$\text{€}(\bar{O})$	SHOW OFF! Are you doing this for me?

IMAGINE \bar{O} !

–I've seen her before.

–Not her. Someone like her.

She applies herself. She learns the technique from work. $w(t)$ The more effort, the greater the reward. She labors under a hidden author. Someone who maintains her in her illusion. Someone who buys all her dreams.

She will take the time to learn and eventually figure out the secret. Along the way, it won't make sense to her. But she will keep on.

I want it because you want it. I want so you can't have it.

The pleasure machine desires its own pleasure.

DESIRE 1: The onset of desire.

DESIRE 2: the prolongation of desire.

$w(t) = Y$ the output

She works to make something.

She works to make something of herself.

IMAGINE \bar{O}

$\text{€}(\bar{O})$ I can touch her skin.

\bar{O}/Q I can feel her next to me.

$\bar{O}/Q = \langle \text{€}, P \rangle$

\bar{N} I can feel her story.

MAKING HER UP

MAKING IT UP

READ CLOSELY AND YOU WILL LEARN *HOW TO FUCK LIKE A MACHINE!*

The utility machine creates machine for pleasure. This allows desire to be the the primary form of pleasure.

DESIRE 2: prolong the pleasure

DESIRE 3: INTENSIFY THE DESIRE

\bar{N} : narrate: phone number

call
dinner
seduction
transport
ecstasy

B(A) What is the price for this intensity.
Work offers her liberation. A

HER INTENSITY OF PLEASURE:

Charlotte	stranger: (S)
Anthea	narration: N̄
Alea	her self desired/detroyed
Giulia	the night
EL	the surprise

The perfect victim wants to dies.
The imperfect victim wants to die and makes it look as if you killed her even though it was a suicide.

There is a flaw in the program that you are running. The machine is creating the error.

–What do you see?
–Where she is from. Where she is going.
–Can you smell her distraction? Can you smell her perfume?

Want1/want2 = CODE
Code1/code2 = MACHINE
The machine runs faster!
ς : It feels like a good day!

NOW: JAY'S MACHINE TO KILL EVERYONE

MACHINE 1
MACHINE TO CREATE → **PLEASURE 1**
MACHINE 2
MACHINE THAT PLEASURES



**MACHINE TO PLEASURE
MACHINE 3
PLEASURE 2**

Why the concern with pleasure?

WORK!

–This is different. I will love you!

–Mother me!

–Smother me!

–You don't really like this.

–No, I don't. That's why I find the degradation so appealing.

CHRISTINE

–I've seen your picture.

–You have.

I wanted to see her picture. I wanted something to hold on to this moment. She has something striking. Too much for this place. But there was still an magic at Lucky's that excited her. And it was more than she could find anywhere else in the world.

–I do have something better somewhere else.

Her long black hair and intense eyes marveled me.

–You're acting kind of silly. I'm supposed to meet a boy. Do you want to make out with my friend?

I don't think that it really happened like that. But I will go along with that version. And I found myself kissing Rosalee as we sat together on the couch.

–I like to kiss.

And I wanted to hear another story from her. She was so full of excitement.

–Is Christine going to marry that guy.

–She thinks that she is going to marry every guy that she's with.

A couple of nights later, I show up. Rosalee is making out with another guy.

Christine isn't here.

I know that Christine could help me escape from this place. She has this wild spirit of the north Georgia woods. And she understands how she has maintained that spirit in the city. There is no naivete on her part. She is confident and knowing. If she wanted, she could overturn the order of Lucky's. But there are other stories calling her.

On another night, I stare into Rosalee's eyes. I can't tell her what I am thinking. But I am reminded of Christine.

Christine could have changed the whole story. I can't keep up. And Rosalee seems oblivious. I disappear back into the night.

EL

El. Elaine and Shelly

Other names were whispered. And these names helped me escape the weave that was Restless. I felt crushed.

–Sit down with us. We can help you escape.

I would remember her name in case I needed her for another story. Elaine. But Shelly would be a better listener.

–We can take you somewhere exciting. Not tonight. But another night.

I listened intently to Elaine. She already knew me and wanted to hear my story.

–We spent days in his apartment. All we did was fuck! It was such a turn on. But there was nothing else to him. He was so possessive.

I imagine being Elaine's captive. This is not my live. I need to make it back to Lucky's

–You're not going to hold me captive here.

–Don't be silly, Crucial. Someone's boxed you in with these tables. Do you want to get up and dance.

–I want to stare into your eyes.

I want to stare in your eyes (while you come)!

How many times had she heard the same words? When did she hand me a script?

–Are you taking over my story?

What do I have in common with you. The music. I lover your perfume. I want to be with you.

–Play some Joy Division. Tie me up and play some Joy Division. Some Killing Joke.

–I have these fantasies.

–Touching fantasies?

I wanted this game to continue on.

–We have to go to Florida.

–You could come along.

–I could blow you in the back seat.

–We could listen to your favorite tunes.

–You could buy me an expensive meal.

–You could pay me for what you want.

–Do you like my tight jeans. I am going to pull them tighter. Shrink them in the ocean. Do you want to come to Florida.

EL EL EL

Repeat.

Christine, can you help me.

Deal with what your dealt!

–I am still saving myself for the perfect KISS!

EL 2

–I felt really strange. I had to take my car in. I took the train home. It was crowded. We were all being jostled about. The train was shaking. I balanced myself by leaning against some

man. As the train pulled ahead, I felt my breasts rub against him. I notice that he was looking at me. But then he turned away. And as the train continued to move, I was being tossed back and forth. I still balanced myself against him. This made me rub my breasts harder against him. And it really turned me on. And he seemed a little uncomfortable. And he tried to slide away from me. But that was just an act. He just let me do my thing. He really enjoyed.

>>We ended up getting off at the same stop. And he remained uncomfortable and wanted to avoid me. But I walked alongside him. It sort of gave him the creeps. Then I stopped suddenly. It was just like when a car comes to a halt at a red light. And when he saw me stop, he thought that he was going to miss the light so he stopped too. But there was no light, no need to stop. Then he turned to me and laughed. We both laughed a hearty laugh.

We stared in each other's eyes. I remembered him touching me. He recalled that same sensation. I don't know what happened next. This place was crowded. Something came over us. I just let him grope me. He was reaching under my skirt. He was touching my breasts. We engaged in a most intense kiss.

Laurel wondered if Selena was making it all up.

–Did it really happen like that? That is just too crazy.

–No, it really happened. That isn't all.

She carried through with the tale.

–I ended up at his place, in his bed. It completely out of control. I don't know what was going on. I just kept remembering the contact in the train. I wanted more of that. After it was all over, he gave me the strangest look. <<You are leaving. I'm not into dreary dinners and dirty picnics.>>

>>I had no idea what he was talking about.

There was another scenario that gets even more absurd. Daryl invited Selena over. To protect herself, she brought Laurel along.

–I don't want to go with you.

–I need you to go.

Daryl tries to get them drunk.

–Have you ever done silly things together.

–Like what?

–Romp around in the nude together. Give each other kisses.

Laurel was insistent.

–We don't play those kind of games.

Selena wasn't sure. She was up for anything.

–You let him play these games with you, you don't know where it's going to stop.

Selena felt that she was on a stage. She was an exhibitionist.

–If he gets his way with us, there's no telling where he is going to stop.

–Laurel, stop being a prude. I hear it's sort of fun.

–It's not like he's going to go out with you. He just wants to fuck.

Laurel was being graphic. She continued.

–Think about how you'll feel about yourself.

Selena was hearing none of this. She took off her top. She started starting to undo her jeans.

Selena walked around his apartment completely naked. He stared at her in a dirty way. Selena felt no shame. Laurel felt paralyzed. She had a few tears in her eyes. She knew that she was going to play along.

–We’re going to hate ourselves for doing this.

Selena was staring at herself in a mirror when he came up behind her and started to massage her body.

SHERYL

–I really hate sex. It makes me hang out with all these guys that I really can’t stand.

–Why do you do it?

–I feel like two people. That’s why I drink. So I’ll just go along. When the urge takes over me, I can’t do anything to stop it. I just go along. I can’t even say anything. I just want to be taken.

–Are you just saying this for my benefit, or is it actually like this?

Sheryl tried being alone. But she felt that she could never catch her breath. She was losing direction. School was boring. She had no real interests. She was good at pleasing guys. Even if it didn’t mean that much for her, it seemed like something. She just wanted her aim to be true. She wanted to find a guy who wasn’t a dick.

–What am I supposed to do? Most of these guys won’t even call me afterwards. And if they do, I wonder why I am even with them. We have nothing in common.

–What do you have in your life?

She wondered. Sure, she had enough to get a guy to go home with her for the night. And there were these other types who wanted to take care of her. But none of it was what she wanted.

She flipped through magazines and wondered if she had what it took to be a model. She imagined herself like one of these girls. She dieted to keep her weight down. And she would occasionally exercise. She had her own routine. But it wasn’t enough. She needed to have that attitude. She needed to refuse to give in. She needed to be more stubborn.

–You look like a model.

The silly complement was enough to make her melt. She couldn’t help it.

–None of us can help it. That’s the trouble with being a girl.

She felt that she couldn’t get along without these guys. But she was hating them all. She couldn’t even remember their names. Not now. Not one of them could really do anything for her. It was hopeless.

Maybe I need to dye my hair.

ROBBERY

–I don’t even know why we let this guy play with us. He’s trying to take over the band. And he brought this stupid guitar player with him.

(–I was never stupid. You’ll see why.)

I had a friend rooming with me. He was visiting from Chicago. And at 7:30 he hears a knock at the door. We'd been out all night, but he decides to open the door.

–We want to see Crucial.

He called me. How did they even find me.

This drummer is threatening.

–If you don't give us our money, we'll beat the shit out of you.

His friend is this combat veteran. And my buddy is pretty useless.

–We spent the money for rent for our rehearsal space. You quit after that.

–I'm going to beat the shit out of you, his friend stared up at me.

–He will.

I could hardly contain the piss at this time of the morning. And the fear made it worse. I reached for my check book.

–Don't try stopping the check.

This was out and out extortion. We would have got our money even if they had never played a note.

–We helped to make you famous.

All I could feel was this incredible need to piss. And I couldn't. I wanted to go back to sleep. I had hardly slept.

–You have to let it be.

–I want revenge.

–They'll die in their own shit.

–You got rid of them cheap.

–Why was he so intense about a few bucks.

–It was for his taxes.

–I never trusted him. He had too many drums.

Who was going to be next? We thought about Wayne or Layton. Someone to help us through our next few shows.

–You could use the Scarecrow.

And so we decided on the Scarecrow.

ALEA

–I like to take risks. I like to take chances

She was not the only one. But she was Alea. She was the wild card. She was proof against an author for the story.

WHENEVER THINGS ARE GOING ACCORDING TO PLAN, ALEA SHOWS UP AND JUST SEND EVERYTHING TOPSY TURVY.

She was

this was my chance

outside of Lucky;s

–Will you give me a ride home?

fucked me over

–I just lay there. I felt numb I couldn't do anything

She really wanted Claude. Everything proceeded from the moment that he tossed her over. She had tried to get close to the source. The center of the universe!

Now it was her mission to prove that the universe had no center

come with me

work

don't worry

You have a really big dick

can I photograph it

–Do you want me to stimulate it?

music gave us an air of celebrity

transmitted a special knowledge

that made us feel that we clued into a deep secret

the beat seemed to unlock all that magic

How can I be an author and not get lost in these variations?

WILLOW	CONNIE
ALEA	SUZI

WILLOW

–What brought you out tonight?

–What do you mean

–Is there a special reason why you come here.

–Like what? What's a special reason?

–You know, a special reason.

–No I don't. What's the secret?

–Do you come here to see someone special.

We were talking. I wasn't sure what she met. Although I could tell that she had a crush on the doorman. This was her special reason for being here.

	ALEA	WILLOW
THE SOURCE: THE CENTER	The center doesn't exist.	She is trying to work her way towards the center
HER IMAGE	She naturally radiates a pure image. She is trying to cultivate an intense image	She is trying to escape her intense image.
PERSONALITY	outrageous	unassuming
RISK	Risk seeking. She has so much to lose.	Risk averse. She has risked so much.
	WILLOW IN REVERSE	ALEA IN REVERSE

For a time she was the most intimidating person. She had a Mohawk that rose to the stars. Everyone wondered what motivated her extreme. For her there seemed little that distracted her from the purity that she conveyed. It was like a sisterhood. She had committed her soul to the spirit of punk. She embodied the rebellion. But it was in no way cliché or cheap. This was real. She had subtracted herself from the mainstream society. She didn't even try to straddle the both worlds. She accepted the reject status in a redemptive way. She was not a cast off. She asserted herself with complete confidence.

image
achievement
(Empty)
-X-

THE NIGHT

At its most intense, I was faced by the utter impossibility of getting anything done when I would wake up the next day. That sinking paralysis struck me with all its force.

Of course, that is really not the case.

my passion

Crucial, you could write an accessible book
 Everyone would love it. They need it. It would be about you.
 how to deal with my craziness
 someone to control me

He pulled me aside
 –You are the house band at Lucky’s

We were performing on the courtyard. As I came off the stage, someone waved to me.

–Do you know who that is?

–No, I don’t.

–She does entertainment news for a cable news show.

Her friend cornered me as I was about to sneak upstairs.

–We want to put you on TV. It would be like an event.

–You’d be great. We need freak like you.

I felt flattered. I am staring up at the night sky.

–We’ll talk about it next time that you play.

–It will be your birthday show. Everyone will be there.

BIRTHDAY FOREVER

Ushered me to one of the VIP rooms upstairs
 Your birthday goes on forever...
 the show (there is no one here).

WORK

–I want you to come in for work today!

–It’s a Sunday. I have to rehearse today. I told you not to put me on the schedule.

–If you don’t come in, I’ll have to write you up.

I really wondered why she thought her power meant that much to me. If I even allowed her to follow through with her threat, what value would the job have.

–You really think that I’m going to come in!

And that was that. I could tell from the moment that she took over that she was pushing things to this moment. She had manipulated the schedule to her advantage. She was trying to break all the holdovers from Blair’s reign. She had thought that she succeeded. Take this job

and shove it!

There was this absurd feeling of liberation that came over me.

–I can do anything.

There was almost a brutality in my confrontation with something verging on fame. I was taking it to its silly conclusion. I didn't have any money. I barely had plans to survive. But I was going to find a way to hang on. How much money did I really need? How much did I really spend? I could suck it up until the magic moment arrive. But what did that mean?

Another night: you call this freedom

THE BLANDS

Back at Restless, a new order blew in like a tornado from North Carolina. They were the last of the New Romantics. They hoped to revive a new glam in the midst of money and pizzaz. They had little of either. But they knew how to pretend so well. The rest of us had been long cleaned out. But they kept the dream alive.

When I first saw them, it was just a blur in the night. And I never gave it too much credibility. I never realized how much of an upheaval this wind would cause.

The two most prominent were Newton and Dominique. With their blonde hair and bangs, they looked like twins. They had a dressed-down style, this Puritan chic. But their attachment to glamor was still evident. I let my wonder keep me at a distance. Were they really acknowledging my fundamental stardom. Who were they?

Somehow Newton and I got pushed together. We were both hanging outside in the courtyard. And I wanted to take a shot at their imminent celebrity. It seemed as if they were trying to revive the aristocracy of the Imperial Set. I felt that we had already torn down those colors. We didn't need the imposition of a new tyranny. But it wasn't hard to make the connection. Newton was friendly. And even if Dominique floated around in the stratosphere, she spoke well for the both of them.

Newton and I joked about the overeager trend scene as it choked on its last moments of excess. In stark contrasts, we christened ourselves the Blands. The Blands weren't the fashion plates. They observed it all from the outside and became frustrated on meaningless emotion. The Blands connected to each other with a hand wave, an open-fingered greeting. Totally lacking any distinction. It represented the zero degree of emotion, an inability to sustain any kind of passion.

BLANDS DO WHAT THEY HAVE TO.

BLANDS HAVE TO DO SOMETHING.

BLANDS REALLY CAN'T DO ANYTHING AT ALL.

BLANDS DO NOTHING!

Newton's philosophy owed much to his sexuality. Like Dominique, he projected his love of sameness. Even though he burned with all the fervor of the aesthetic, he allowed his ideal its primary realization in the male form. Dominique followed him confusingly as if she was a twin. Her budding stardom captivated everyone, but her zeal was primarily focused on women. She allowed men to pay her tribute. And she gave so many pause to think about her ambiguity.

Newton's fire was so fleeting. Even as he raged in all his beauty, he knew his boyhood

charms were about to cease. She would continue on and combine the fire of both of them. And as he faded, she seemed to emerge in a bolder version. Be Bold! She liked that. It embodied the limits of her rebellion.

Dominique would find her own stage. And Newton would help sustain me in my image of the Blands. In fact, I now had the perfect concept to limit any challenges to Cruciality. I could act the part of a Bland. I was immune. No one could touch me.

Eventually, Newton would form a more committed alliance with the Buford Boys. The Buford Boys all seemed to offer testimony to the promise of spring. In reality, they watched from the sidelines. The Buford Boys had the aspirations of the Blands. But they had none of the irony. Herein lay the ultimate paradox. Their grasp could never attain their reach.

Newton and Jerry would one day become roommates. As Jerry became more butch he would be the perfect *id* for Newton's perverse vision. Jerry would claim to act out the risk-dominated behaviors of a night cruiser. They would both find delight in playing out these demented visions.

Not to be undone, Newton engineered his own transformation. He knew that down deep he truly was a bland. So he needed a true alter ego, not just a partnership with Jerry. He became a drag queen, almost the incarnation of a child star. And he plunged himself in a kiddie pool full of pork and beans. He was finally returning to his rural origins with a vengeance. Even Jerry could not top that one.

I use to marvel about Newton's experiences as a nurse. He would talk about trying to sexually stimulate his comatose patients. I felt somewhat aghast about the practice. But it was one more adventure of the night. I felt almost as helpless as one of his patients. What was the night doing to me?

I was becoming a **BLAND**.

THE FIRES

I knew the life was being sucked from me. I too was becoming one of the undead. The exploration needed to continue. We were all descending that path. Being a zombie was just one more stage in exploring the outre. Sure it was magic and play-acting. So none of it seemed that real. I indulged by giving up my time. But I never really tasted. I just observed these other souls twisting in their depraved vision. And I was entertained by the paroxysms.

Some accused me of inciting the players. Where else did the script originate. It was if I taunted the poor souls to descend into deeper and deeper levels of decadence. And then I only mocked their moral weakness.

–Isn't that a position reserved for the divine.

–Exactly.

–You could have so much more power if you just went to the other side.

I wondered what that meant. Human sacrifice. I hardly wanted to endorse such absurdities. But I felt that I was learning about something analogous. What really went on around these fires that blared in the night. I knew that look of recognition as I walked by. They assumed that my intensity was equally inspired by the same demons. So I went along with that bizarre fellowship. Under these circumstances, they might all reveal those safely-guarded secrets

to me. I always assumed a ritual that tied them together in a spiritual bondage. And this was more than the Imperial Set could even dream of.

Everything tied together. The Imperial Set had watched *The Hunger* with the desire of evoking a sect that would embody all its essential desires. It would give clearer meaning to their desire to be thin. The promise of image. Only the most perfect could cross over. Thea embodied the commitment. Courtney had imitated the same devotion. But the order had been long abandoned. It was all an amateur proposition. It had only been the most intense due to a steady supply of drugs.

If the same might be said, about the coven that gathered around these fires, there was something else that made it much more serious. Sure, Guy may have plied these young psyches with acid. But there was something more infernal in their internal chemistries. These imbalances mixed the perfect dose. And each participant sucked up every ounce of their dose. They didn't need a pusher. They needed a guru. Somewhere in the nether reaches, a warlock fed their frenzies. Even in that wave to me, they almost suggested that I could play that role.

Still, I felt this chasm that separated me from that world. I was attracted to its excesses. But I was not confident enough to cross gap. I felt that one day the two versions might come together. But for the time being, we remained in two different world.

Some of these goblins would sneak into Restless. And there were probably more among our midst than I realized. But for the most part, they remained somewhat separate from the pretense of Restless and its sister haunt Lucky's.

As I looked around, I could see the signs of a coming change. But the Titans were slipping from the heights. There was a curse in their midst. The Buford Boys would never reach those same elevations. The Imperial Set was falling from the heavens. The VC kept a temporary court at Lucky's.

So the few of us took on those spaces in between. But we spent so much time observing that we were becoming caught in the act of seeing. We couldn't assume the role that had been offered us. No one could detect our insecurities. But we could not step up at the right moment. Who was playing our song?

THE CONNIE THEORY

Derivation from $\varphi(M)$ to ζ .

$$\varphi(M) = A$$

$$\varphi(M) \times \mathbf{n} = A$$

Something that I can hold on to. Something that I can shape.

n

$$\sum_{i=1} \varphi_i(M)$$

Socrates wants me

ε

Coaxing

A	
	⊖

A	1
	⊖

initial term as $\square / \blacksquare = \iota$

$v_i = @$

$\xi > @$

standing in the center of the dance floor at Lucky's

A

α

É

ε

⊖

⊖

Once the Imperial Set can mix their dose of death, they appear to take back their crown.

The Great Man is willing to risk it all.

Any player can imagine that his

have all the import of the original players

I was standing in the center of the upstairs dance floor of Lucky's. Mirrors surrounded me and engulfed me. I stretched my hand up to match a dramatic passage in the music.

–What is prompting you to do this?

I moved forward as if to pass through a wall. I spun through it in a direction that counter the initial movement of my hand. It was part of a balance. I allowed myself to get carried by the thrust of the turn. I can feel myself successively spun around. Even if I only mimicked a couple of these turns, I could sense that I was part of a deeper flow. I pulled both hands up to arrest the progress. I moved back slightly.

Did I have I had an audience through these transformations? I looked around. I noticed every adjustment in the mirror. I was perfecting my flight. A bird that leapt up in the air and then contracted afterwards. There was such tension in my descent. It was as if I am coveting a hole deep in the earth from where I could espouse more infernal energies. My whole body radiated the heat.

Connie was somewhere lost in her work. I looked for her. She was in her midriff-exposing designer outfit is the last in the dynasty of Queens. She still bore the legacy of the Imperial Set. Like KÉ or like Thea, she carried on that same illustrious magic. She tried to suggest that by her glide across the floor.

–Is she working tonight?

–Of course she is.

Unlike the Count or Anthea, Connie represented a turn towards new blood. But she carried on the principles of the Imperial Set. They still knew how to balance their excesses with the demands to the daytime. For her, this meant working at Lucky's. But her balance was not the precarious strategy of Ultra. She knew how to focus the excess. For the Imperial Set, even the most extreme gestures were all part of a controlled artifice. They seldom questioned that balance. It gave them just enough so that they could explore the mysteries of the night. Anything more than this dramatics and they would all go hurtling off into oblivion.

I could feel that I was reaching to pull her towards me. But as the night wore on, the distance became more and more acute. I could never reach her, try as I may. And she was not going to make the least effort to leave her perch. She liked its safety. She was obliged to stay where she was. And I couldn't do any more to attract her to my intensities. Sure she experienced some of the same things. But she could complete the risk at home while listening to her stereo. She had just enough of a suggestion of the other side to explore its coastline. But she was not ready to strike forth in public. She needed to maintain the serenity of her image. On her nights off, she might lead her crew on hyper-active dance. But that's where it would begin and end. She needed the icy exterior for the rest of her time. It wasn't for any lack of emotion. She just knew the inevitable consequences of a passion played on stage. She surrounded her with admirers who all felt the same. So an observer could never be sure of the actual resolution of their intrigues. All combination were to be contemplated and indeed possible.

For me, she was moving to a place that was once occupied by KÉ. But Connie could hardly realize the import of such a transition. She was never really part of the Weekday Group. She has little idea what was now happening at Restless. Even if she could move to the latest industrial beat, there was a rhythmic groove that seemed to elude her. This was all part of that icy exterior that she sought to maintain. The pose never really allowed her to lose control. She

didn't know how to throw herself.

All this didn't matter for the time that I was serving at Lucky's. I could feel that something was already coming to an end. All the excitement of the Imperial Set had waned long ago. And Lucky's had never really offered that sustained excitement. For a while I wondered what kept me going here. I had felt the same way years before. It was what caused me to migrate to Atlanta. The identical questions were reappearing. Was I to continue to wander in this wilderness. Connie was at least an observer to my struggle. As such, I reached out to her for what it was worth.

I was fearful of getting caught up in a nostalgia. There was something wicked in my own transformation.