

marry susa





Hi,



*We are Mary Sue -
We are an older sister, a long lost
friend, a shoulder to cry on, a nostalgic
chick flick from 2002, we are comfort food.
Mary Sue is a magazine for the teething pains
of your 20s, when you're not quite an adult
but you're not also definitely not a teenager
anymore.*

*Welcome to our first issue - inspired by
femininity and learning to feel confident in
your own skin. We cover everything from
finding a role model, finding a virtual avatar
and finding yourself (or finding that one
lipstick from the mess that is your make up
drawer).*

Love, Aliesha

x



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*...psst! scan here to get
into the bimbo headspace!*

I
WanNa
be A
Bimbo
Doll



*Styling and Photography: Aliesha Matthews
Model: Jessica Johansson
Article and illustrations: Aliesha Matthews*



What is a bimbo?

a particularly stupid man in the early 20th century. The word comes from the Italian word for male child, thus the comparison of an unintelligent gentleman to that of a child. In the 1920s, the term began to be used to refer to women as well as men and it stayed gender neutral up until about the 1940s when usage of the word began to dwindle entirely.

When I was growing up, bimbo was a word that was used as an insult - it meant stupid, vapid and superficial. If you were a bimbo, then that translated to trashy and it was not a term you wanted to be associated with. When I first started seeing the word being thrown around again, I was reminded of the venom that it used to carry - is this really a term that can be reclaimed?

When you scroll through #Bimbo on TikTok, the first video you are greeted with is an motivational message - "Baby remember. Men are replaceable, but you know what's not replaceable? Your gorgeous, stunning, amazing, beautiful FAT ASS!". The inspirational speaker in the video is none other than Chrissy Chlapecka, one of the most popular "Bimbo-tok" influencers on the platform. Chlapecka is heavily associated with the modern day Gen Z Bimbo manifesto, which essentially boils down to loving yourself unapologetically, reclaiming the term to weaponise the hyper femininity of the bimbo character as a feminist icon.

Let's start at the beginning - where does "bimbo" linguistically come from? Well initially it was a term used to describe

In the 80s, the word started seeing an increase in usage - mostly revolving around political sex scandals, referring to the mistresses of political figures as "bimbos" even though in most cases they were not at all dense just attractive. Throughout the late 80s and 90s the word began to see more and more usage in a very misogynistic way, being used to degrade women such as Donna Rice and Fawn Hall who were wrapped up in these political affairs. Since then, especially in the early 2000s with personalities like Paris Hilton and Jordan/Katie Price gracing the TV screens of millions, the term 'bimbo' had been strongly rooted in the zeitgeist as an insult - a synonym for fake, tacky, slutty or ignorant.

That is until about 2017, when a popular "bimbo-fication" meme started spreading around social media: it was at first considered a controversial social commentary as it depicted a very glamorous, tanned blonde woman transforming into a studious, pale, brunette woman after reading a book. The meme of course raised questions of not just blatant sexism but also colourism and objectification - why was

the woman stupid when she was tanned but after picking up a book she became pale? Why did the size of her breasts get smaller the more she read? The origin of the meme soon surfaced as it began to spread - "Bimbo-fication" was actually a niche genre of erotic fetish art.

This particular example shows the previous heavily sexualised nature of the term 'Bimbo' quite well: the idea of an air headed, hyper feminine sex doll translates very clearly into how women are often depicted in pornography. In fact, a bimbo's sexuality is one of the key components of the post 80s use of the term, given that it stems from degrading women involved in extra marital affairs. The old use of the term gave the connotation of being "easy" - a girl so stupid that she would sleep with just about anyone or take her clothes off at any opportunity - taking all of the blame away from the men involved in the scandals. It's pretty clear to see the blatant misogyny loaded into the past usage of the term, and it demonstrates antiquated female ideals really clearly.

So who is the bimbo in 2022? The Gen Z bimbo is almost unrecognisable in all ways except that hyper feminine aesthetic. Bimbo Tok is an inclusive community, which accepts not just bimbos, but also "himbos and thembos" - the male and non binary bimbo equivalent according to Chlapecka. There is a clear characterization involved in many of the popular video trends that circulate the online community, for example a trend where each bimbo films themselves doing their version of a 'Bimbo Walk'. A 'bimbo



walk' is essentially a satirization of how female characters are often portrayed in media like video games and cartoons, which is sexualised and impractical. The Gen Z bimbo has a certain level of self awareness and irony, as do most things that Gen Z do which separates it from the previous generations.

As with anything on the internet, the Bimbo movement has attracted a lot of discourse - some argue that the willingness to identify yourself as a bimbo is just internalized misogyny presenting itself in a glamourized way, and argue that it is a negative representation for young tweens as it encourages them to sexualise themselves. Others believe that by reclaiming and satirizing the trope, you can turn it into an empowering lifestyle and flip the joke onto men as opposed to dragging women down.

Mary Sue found in a survey that the majority of readers think that it can be reclaimed - one responder said "it's almost like an escape from the mundane in real life... I can be this glamorous, sexy princess that doesn't have a care in the world and it makes me feel a lot more confident" and another said "as a transwoman, it really helps me feel more in control of my femininity". In general, 78% of people surveyed said that they thought 'Bimbofication' had more positive aspects than negative aspects - including feeling empowered, confidence, sex positivity and community spirit as the most common positives.

Behind the scenes of the photoshoot we chat to our self-proclaimed Bimbo babe

Jessa - "I don't see Bimbo as an insult. Seeing beautiful, strong women take the word and claiming it back from misogynistic men inspires me every day. I see the term as an empowering statement allowing women to express themselves and their femininity. Bimbo shows that the criticism of men doesn't control how women should feel about themselves". She said that she feels empowered by taking her hyper-feminine presentation out of the hands of the male gaze. "I have the big boobs, I have the big lips, the lashes... but I'm in control, I'm not there for anyone else's enjoyment but my own and I love it."

Out of the negative aspects the main concern raised was that of promoting old fashioned beauty ideals - one reader wrote "a lot of the girls are thin, white and cis - I don't see any problem with the ideas behind the group but it doesn't really change anything if it is only barbie look-a-likes that promote the message." While most prominent Bimbo Tok accounts preach that anyone can be a bimbo - scrolling through the tag you can see the most popular videos mostly consist of exactly as our reader described. Some argue that instead of changing anything, the movement (whether intentionally or not) is actually regressive in the way that it promotes the heavy glam aesthetic.

Something that was most often brought up as a concern was the concept of plastic surgery as there is a particular section of BimboTok that revolves around a very plastic image and believes that part of being a Bimbo is getting surgeries to

"I'm
not
there
for
anyone
else's
enjoyment
but
my
own
- I love
it"
Jess xo



"It's all about freedom" 





achieve this particular aesthetic. While it is a niche part of an already niche community, meaning that it might not effect a huge demographic, it does definitely exist and raises wider debates about plastic surgery outside of the Bimbo aesthetic. The Kardashians and their heavily altered figures have always attracted a lot of attention, but notably Kim has had some of her fillers in her body dissolved which raises questions of whether fast fashion has even extended to the literal shape of your body and if we will see a shift in beauty image ideals following this trend. Jess said "It's all about freedom, yes I have had work done but that is my choice and I stand by it. I will always be open about it, when you aren't honest about what you've had done you are taking that freedom away from others."

"I like the idea of reclaiming the "Bimbo", they're often my favourite trope of character in old OOs movies," one reader writes, "however a lot of the content I see on my FYP relating to #bimbo is more

about promoting make up and clothing brands, so it feels more like an ad than a political statement to me". This reader makes a good point, it doesn't take very long to find fast fashion clothing hauls in the tag on TikTok - however this is not an issue isolated to just the bimbo community but more of a platform wide issue. Unfortunately with a lot of these kinds of visually expressive movements, there is always someone looking to capitalise on it - a similar thing happened with the #cottagecore aesthetic during the global lock downs of 2020. A sweet trend that focussed on capturing the moments spent out in nature and the romanticisation of a more simple life spiralled into a fast fashion micro trend quicker than you could realise.

Just like anything, the Bimbo movement is neither wholly good nor bad, but it is uplifting and fun, I feel like this is something young people have been craving since the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic and subsequent isolation. The Bimbo movement provides a refreshing world where all you need to do is wear cute, little outfits and party with your friends, something that many have actually not had the chance to do if they turned 18 in 2020. There is a self-awareness and irony that makes it just so addictive, for example the song Bimbo Doll by Tila Tsoli (opener to our bimbofied playlist) is so catchy and bubbly whilst being so clever at the same time - you can see why the community is considered a safe heaven for the hyper feminine.

So, do you wanna be a bimbo doll too?

Too
much is
never
enough

Tumblr Returns.

Words by Aliessa Matthews. Images by (15 year old) Aliessa Matthews

I can remember when I made my first Tumblr blog, I was 13 and I used it to find pictures of my favourite celebrities for a few months before running out of space on my phone and then uninstalling the app and forgetting about it. Fast forward to 2014, when I made my second ever Tumblr blog. I thought I knew everything - and looking back, maybe I did? As a teenager everything feels so much more intense, and I truly had a strong sense of self at the time but I was also very insecure. I always wanted to be cool, mysterious and interesting - and what was more mysterious and cool than Tumblr? The person I always dreamt of being when I left school is very much not who

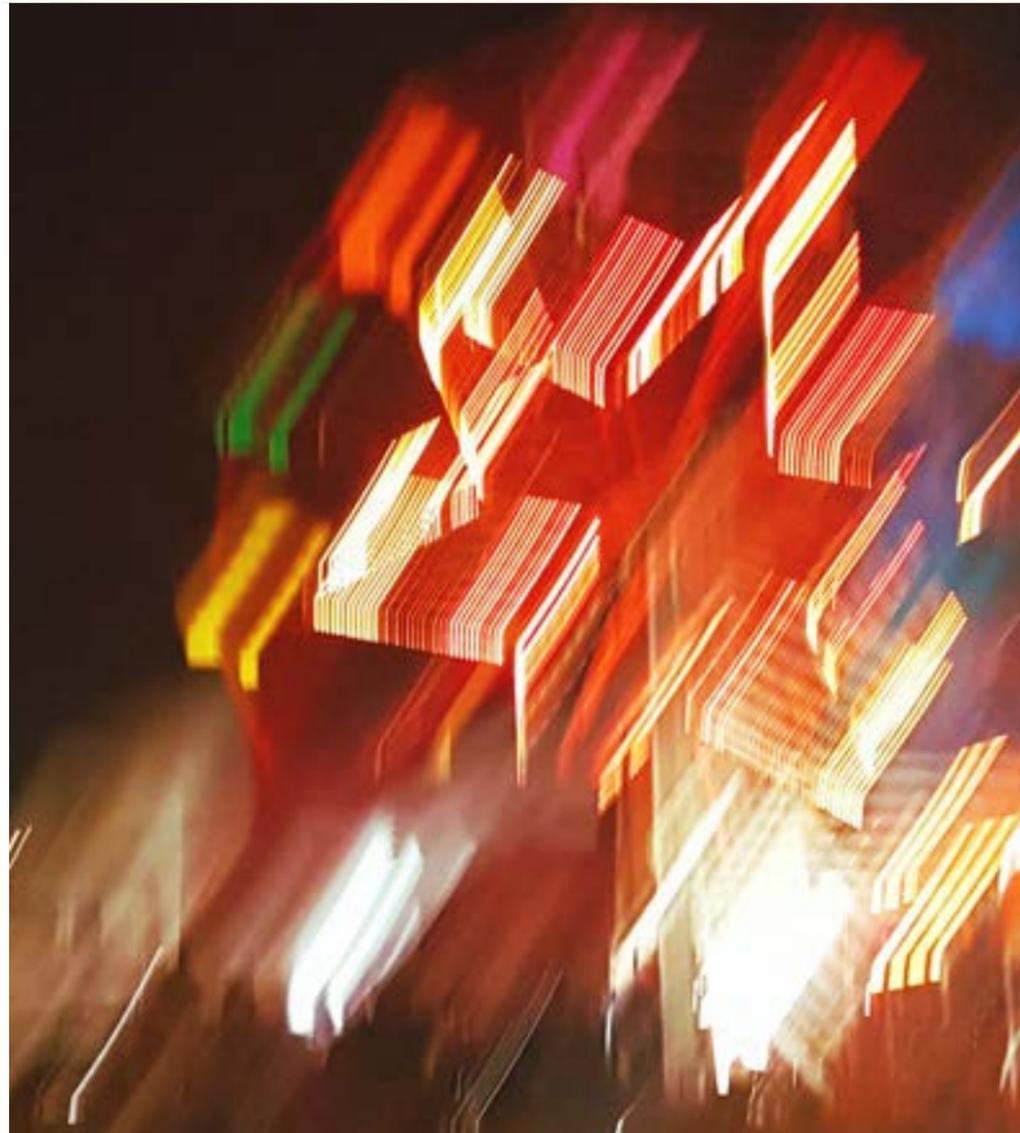
I am right now, and that's okay but with regaining it's pre-Yahoo legacy day by day I wanted to look over my own Tumblr days while I explore what Tumblr means in 2022.

Let me set the scene, you're on the bus or in the back of the car and it's raining... Suddenly you hear the perfect song and you feel like the main character in the emotional climax of a coming of age movie. For me that song was probably Sky Ferreira's 'I Blame Myself' or Tennis' 'Modern Woman' - and naturally that moment had to be captured and documented on my Tumblr blog. There was something about Tumblr that felt so private,



4,018 notes





4,018 notes



it was like a diary for me. My friends had Tumblr but we didn't really follow each other since we were into our own things, I truly felt anonymous and I could post anything without feeling like I'd be judged - my second Tumblr blog was full of my inner thoughts and feelings without me even fully realising it at the time.

I think that's why a lot of people are drawn back to the site even now, compared to many other social medias it still feels so private especially now that many original Tumblr users moved to Twitter after the site's steady decline post its 2018 nudity ban. Compared to other social media platforms Tumblr has also retained it's simplicity, which is what made it so successful in the first place - there are no stories or algorithms to keep up with, just content in chronological order. Gen Z especially love that Tumblr is less advertiser friendly, and who can blame them?

Looking over my old photos makes me really nostalgic, I had such big ideas when I was posting on Tumblr regularly. I had about 10

followers and I'm pretty sure only 1 of them was a real person, but I still treated it like it was my own little megaphone to the rest of the world. I'd take photos of everything and anything I thought looked cool, I even made mock album covers for my favourite bands that I posted in hopes that one of them might see it and get me a job as a designer. Maybe 15 year old me would be disappointed that I don't post all my "edgy" photos like I used to, and that I don't dye my hair or take crazy outfit pictures anymore. She's almost definitely disappointed that in 2021 my top artist was Bruno Mars and not The Flaming Lips - but I think she would be happy that I am happier.

Tumblr was a mixed bag when it came to the topic of mental health, on one hand it was one of the first platforms where people could speak about their mental health openly, there were many blogs that had lots of resources for dealing with anxiety or depression and you could find others on the site that were experiencing the same feelings so you didn't have to feel alone in whatever it was you were going through - the problem is that

a lot of users on the site didn't want to get better. There was a huge emphasis on the "aestheticism" of sadness, it was portrayed as cool and edgy rather than concerning.

One of the main concerns that people have about Tumblr having a comeback moment is just how negative Tumblr was for many young people back in the day. A hotspot for communities that glorified mental illnesses and discouraged seeking help or recovery because mental illness was seen as a defining factor of your personality. Many teens struggle with their mental health growing up, and the internet can sometimes be a good platform to let it out - however Tumblr definitely wasn't that for many of us. For me Tumblr was where I discovered the concept of 'Thinspo' for the first time which led to years of disordered eating and body image struggles, which still effects me now as it never goes away. The community was so extreme that Tumblr now displays PSAs when you search certain terms, advising users to get help which is definitely a positive step forward.

The memories are bitter-sweet, on the one hand Tumblr was a place where I could be alone and post in private but it was also a place that I was alone and was posting in private so no one would have any idea. I don't think that any social media is truly perfect, and I'm wholly aware that communities just like those toxic ones from years ago exist on all platforms and that it is not a Tumblr exclusive issue.

I want to say that I'm looking forward to grid patterns and tattoo chokers making a comeback in 2022, however my main concern is on the future of the platform. I want it to come out better than it was in 2014, with better moderation and safe guarding in place. I want teenagers in 2022 to have the same photo diary, cringey song lyric, digital diary experience that I had (minus the bad bits of course). I think that in the wake of TikTok and Instagram apps that are designed to be addictive and to sell you things, the creativity and simplicity of simple reblogs is a refreshing step back to what a social media should truly be about.



4,018 notes

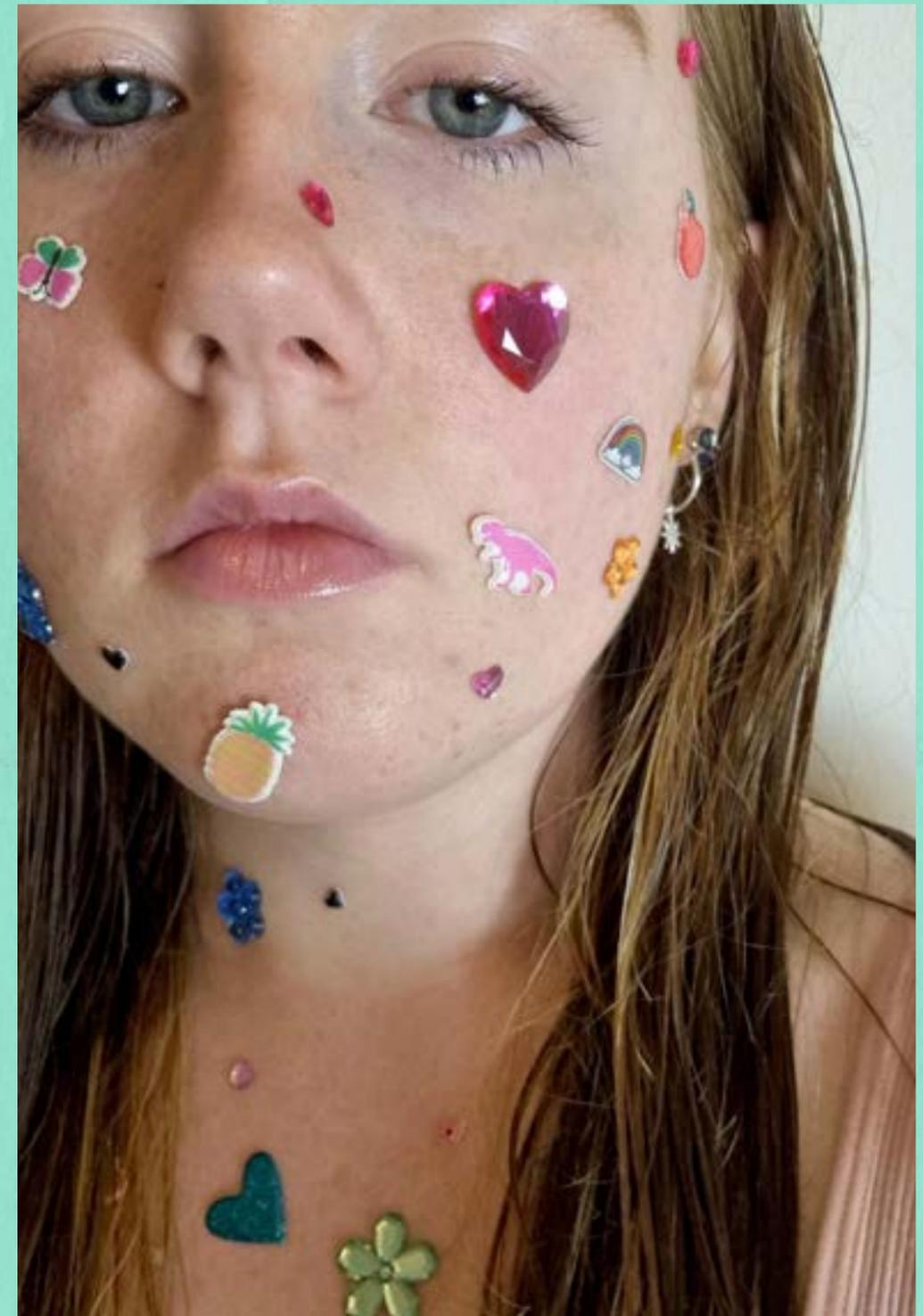






Photography, Make Up and Direction: Aliesha Matthews





the divine feminine

Words by Aliesha Matthews. Image courtesy of Brian Smith, the Williams sisters in 1994.

Femininity comes in many different forms - yet so frequently we are only presented a very narrow vision of what being "feminine" truly means. Since the rise of the fourth wave of feminism in the early 2010s, the media has put a focus on "strong female role models" however the way that these women are depicted is usually in line with that of conventional beauty standards if they fit them. If they don't fit them, then they are portrayed in a much more masculine way, for example women who are Olympic athletes who need to be more muscular to succeed... these "strong female role models" are shamed for being too strong. In this article, Mary Sue explores the 'Divine Feminine' in 2022, and how role models can be both strong and feminine at the same time.

Tennis is a sport typically associated with a sort of middle class femininity - when you think of tennis you typically think of ponytails, pristine white skirts and little pastel tank tops. When you think of a woman in tennis who do you think of? Personally, Venus and Serena Williams come to mind - the two sisters became icons and role models for a whole new generation through out the 2000s, after the 2002 French Open where the two were ranked in the top 2



singles positions by the Women's Tennis Association, a record breaking first time the spots had ever been held by two sisters at the same time.

In 2021, both women were billed as Executive Producers of the movie "King Richard", directed by Reinaldo Marcus Green, which documents their path to success. The movie particularly focuses on the role of Richard Williams in the teenage years of their careers, their father and coach, played by Will Smith. The film has been widely praised for how it covered issues of race, class and celebrity within the sports world - all factors which are the harsh reality of success for the sisters. In total, the film has won a total of 33 awards for its acting, plot and message which truly highlights just how important the Williams are as role models.

Despite their amazing talents and successes, both women have received a lot of negative attention from both the public and the press. In 2001, after Venus withdrew from a match at the Californian Indian Wells tournament, both she and her father were brutally boo-ed by the crowd as racial slurs were hurled in their direction. Being a sport mostly populated by upper class, white

women for the Williams sisters it has been harder for them to be recognised for their talents - Serena, winner of 23 Grand Slam singles titles, as recently as 2015 was still receiving poorly veiled racist comments on social media. The sisters have even been called "the William's Brothers" in 2014 by Shamil Tarpishev, the head of the Russian Tennis Federation for their taller and more muscular physiques. Of course these comments comparing them to men are influenced heavily by misogynoir in the sports industry, where black female athletes are often held to different standards than white female athletes.

Tennis, especially, is a difficult environment to exist in as a woman - many of the other top achieving women in tennis keep themselves lean as it is deemed more feminine. Agnieszka Radwanska and her coach revealed in a 2015 interview with the New York Times that she tries to stay small and avoid putting on muscle, stating she cares about the way she looks because "[she is] a girl". German tennis star, Andrea Petkovic, said that she hated seeing photos of herself playing tennis because of the way her arms look, "Women, when we grow up we've been judged more, our physicality is judged more, and it makes us self-conscious," she told the New York Times. She recounted being compared to a body builder due to her muscular arms in photos - however it raises the question why should a woman have to sacrifice her athletic ability in order to appear more feminine?

"then i realized that you really have to

Image courtesy of Kevin Larmarque.



learn to accept and love who you are."

The Williams sisters at Wimbledon, 2008.

One thing about the Williams sisters is that they have always presented very femininely, both on and off the court, even as teenagers. They are always put together, and well accessorised - of course this not a priority for a tennis player however the little details can be seen as a rebellion against the elitist view of how a tennis player should look. Their hyper-feminine presentation could be seen as retaliation against the hateful comments comparing them to men, a subtle protest of showing that femininity doesn't necessarily have to stem from being dainty or small and that athletic, powerful women can tap into their inner divine femininity.

In an interview with Vogue, Serena talked about her journey to start to love her body - "For years I've only done Thera-Bands and things like that, because that's kind of how I felt. But then I realized that you really have to learn to accept who you are and love who you are. I'm really happy with my body type, and I'm really proud of it. Obviously it works out for me. I talk about it all the time, how it was uncomfortable for someone like me to be in my body." Growing up the scrutiny of the media can't have been easy, but that's why both of the sisters remain such positive role models - they show that you can be more feminine and strong at the same time, and that's so much more powerful than the stereotypical "Strong Female Role Model" presented so often in the media.

LETTER

to

MY

SELF

A reminder to be kind
to yourself always,

Submissions by Emily
Avant and Eli Croker.

Hi mini me!

A lot has changed in the last decade, you realise who you are in a year or two but it takes a while longer to admit it to yourself- spoiler alert, you're not a girl but you sure as hell fancy them! So that's fun to come to terms with. Being out still isn't easy all the time but it's not so bad either, and you do alright at school so don't freak out about that too much (but for the love of god do your homework on time it's more stress than it's worth to ignore it).

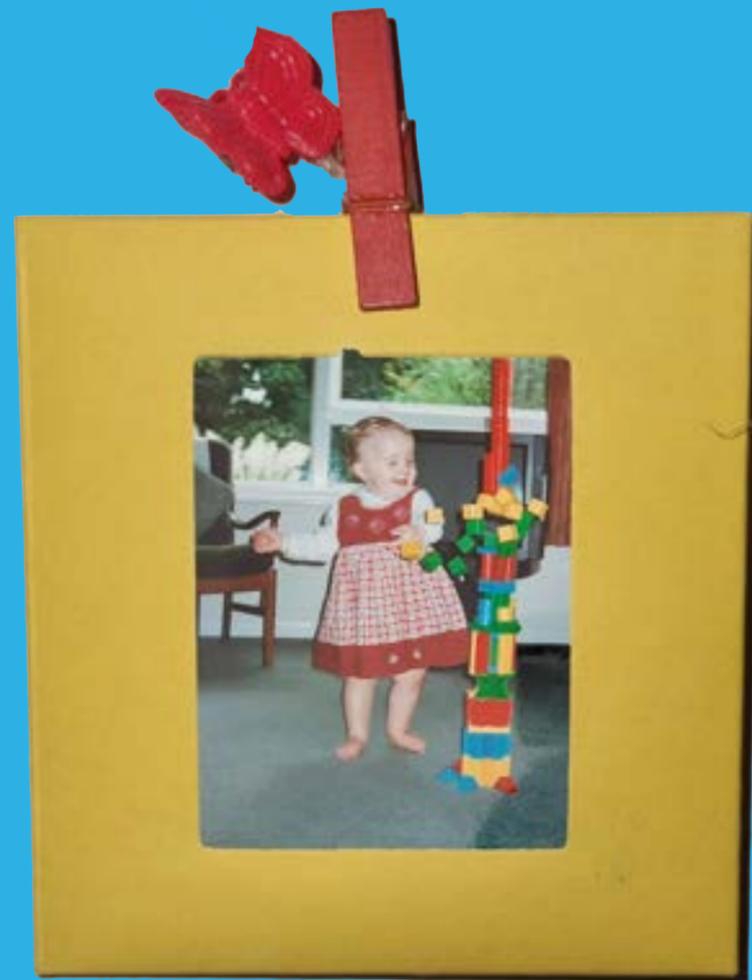
You finally grew into your ears by the way, and you'll realise eventually that your nose is great so don't hate on it too much :) I'd give you a list of boys to stay away from too, but really I'd say just stay away from boys in general, they're really not worth it.

Try hard, make friends, you'll be just fine (and you'll also get some sick tattoos so start saving up now)

With Love,

Eli x"





“Dear Emily,

Things won't always go as planned, but that's okay, everything will work out alright in the end. Never forget that you are valued and loved, it can be hard to see your place in the world sometimes, but you can, and will, make the world a better place. Always try to be kind to yourself, we're in this together.

I love you,

Emily <3”

“To Liesh,

I don't know where to start but we did it - all those times we thought a small mistake was the end of the world... I want to tell you to stop worrying about every little thing. Just have fun and keep being yourself, not everything in life is as serious as you thought so don't waste it. Also don't dye your hair brown, pink was so much better...

See you one day,

Liesh”



SMILE



LET'S GET DIGITAL.

STYLING AND PHOTOGRAPHY: ALIESHA MATTHEWS
MODEL: DANIELA JIMENEZ AND WAHIBA KAFI



SCAN TO BE TRANSPORTED!





WORLD IS MINE!!!

世界でいちばんおひめさま そう
いう扱い 心得てよね sekai
de ichiban ohimesama sou iu
atsukai kokoroete yo ne

その一 いつもと違
つくこと sono ic
chigau kamigata
koto

その二 ちゃんと靴
sono ni chanto k
koto

いいね? ii ne?

その三 わたしの
言葉で返事する

watashi no hitoko
no kotoba de henji

わかったら右手がお留

なんとかして! wakat

ga orusu nano o na

べつに わがままなんて言

んだから betsu ni wag

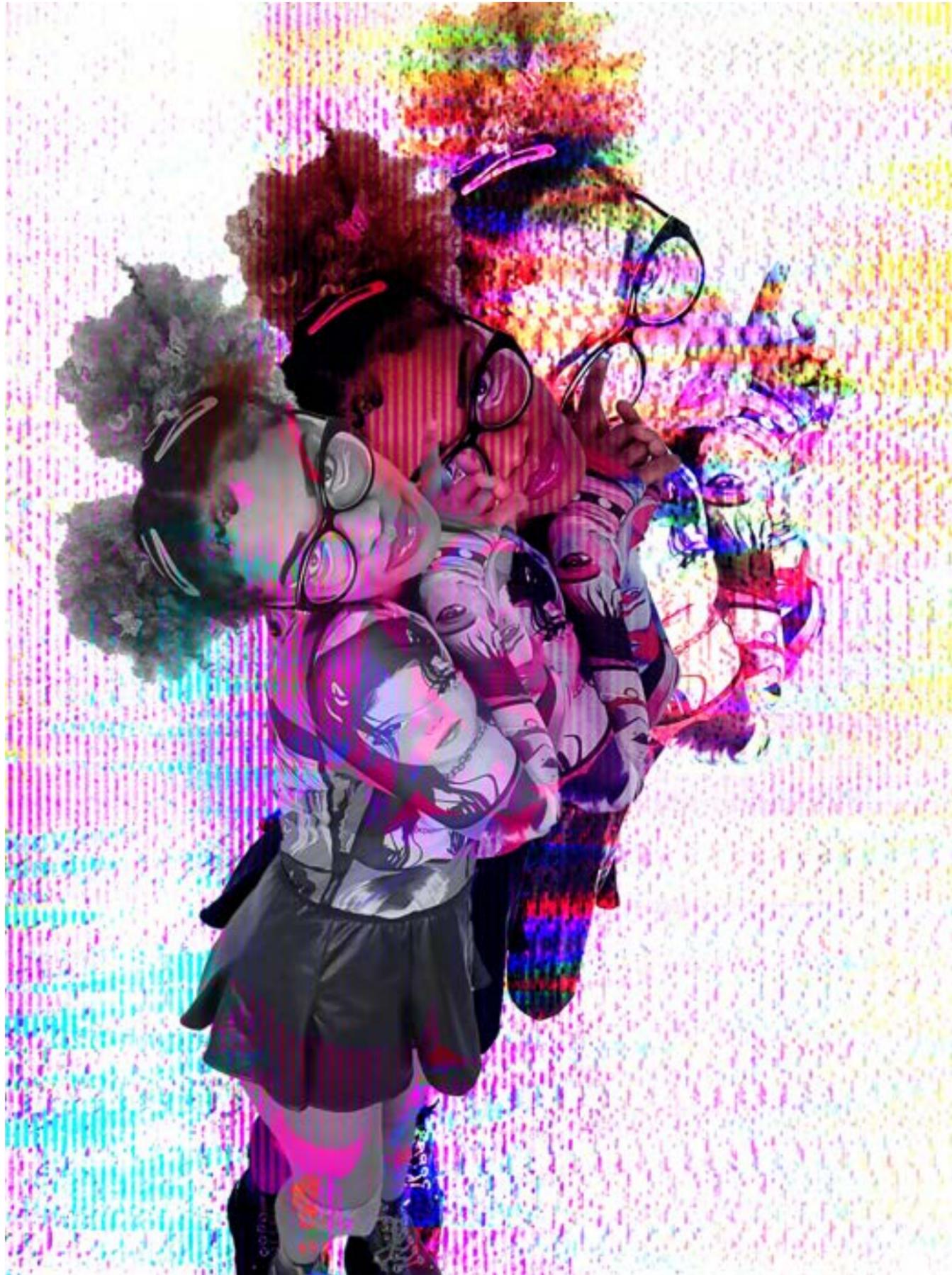
nante itte nain dakara

キミに心から思っ
て欲しいの

ni kokoro kara omotte hosh

かわいって kawaii tte





KEEP IN MIND...

冗談じゃないわ joudan janai wa
はっきり言って hakkiri itte
本気じゃないなら今すぐに get
out ! honki janai nara ima suga

口を逃かさな

そういうのって sou iu no tte
理解に苦しむだけか rikai ni kurushimu dake ka...
rikai ni kurushimu dake ka... no...
Ha...

keep in keep in keep in
keep in keep in keep in
kagen ni shite yo!

break away break away
ドキドキさせてよ doki doki sasete
yo
退屈じゃやなの taikutsu jya iya
nano

break away break away
今すぐ ねえ抱きしめてよ Ah
ima sugu dakishimete yo Ah

はぐらかさないでよね
hagurakasanaide you ne



Sue // // // Let's Get Digital // // //





Words by Aliesha Matthews.

20 years ago the concept of a 'Girl Boss' was something almost revolutionary, a powerful woman smashing glass ceilings and subverting traditional career goals to make it for herself. The Girl Boss type character dominated the chick flicks of the early 2000s - Andie Anderson in *How To Lose A Guy in 10 Days* was a driven journalist trapped in a job working for a vapid fashion magazine (in hindsight this is quite a misogynistic concept). Elle Woods in *Legally Blonde* still remains a popular cultural icon, making her way into a Harvard law course just to get back at an ex (which once again, seems quite misogynistic without the rose

coloured glasses of nostalgia.) Despite the questionable plotlines, these characters are remembered fondly and referenced countless times in modern media - so how does a once motivational concept become such a laughing stock in 2022?

One of the main arguments against 'Girl Boss Feminism' is that it is widely based in capitalism - owning a successful business or becoming the CEO of a big company - and at its root capitalism benefits from the exploitation of people of colour and women, therefore most consider it to not really be feminism in its own right. The Girl Boss movement has been commodified, displayed in a quirky 70s inspired type face plastered

across a t-shirt you can buy in H&M. The problem with this is that when you buy this '#Girls Power' T-shirt, you aren't actually doing anything to support women, in fact if anything it is a step backwards as fast fashion companies routinely exploit women in countries with less labour restrictions in order to maximise profits. Your token slogan tee just puts money into the hands of a rich CEO rather than doing any good.

Sophia Amoruso, founder of the fast fashion brand Nasty Gal, was highly regarded as the face of the 2010s self-made Girl Boss - in fact she has branded herself around the term; her autobiography was titled #GirlBoss, her Netflix TV series had the same title, and in 2017 she founded Girl Boss Media (a content creation platform for fellow girl bosses). In 2016, Nasty Gal filed for bankruptcy for a multitude of reasons - most interesting being a "toxic work culture" that prevented efficient communication. Nasty Gal is a great example of all of the things wrong with "#Girl Boss" culture - first of all just because you are one of few self-made female entrepreneurs doesn't mean you can do no wrong. Amoruso came under fire for being narcissistic and rude towards her employees, and she admitted that she was a poor leader which led to her stepping down from her CEO position just 1 year prior to Nasty Gal's bankruptcy.

Another example of this "Gaslight, Gatekeep, Girl Boss" toxicity is of course Elizabeth Holmes, whose story was

recently turned into a hit Disney Plus series starring Amanda Seyfried. Holmes is an embodiment of the meme - however at the end of the day her actions did end up affecting real people for her own gain. At its core that's the issue that many take up with Girl Boss culture, that its very nature is selfish - it's feminism for the individual gain as opposed to the good of society as a whole, which also means that only specific groups of women are able to benefit from the Girl Boss mantra.

If you touched a social media app in the month of January this year, you will have seen or heard Molly Mae's infamous "we all have the same 24 hours in a day" line - this statement sums up the millennial, capitalist version of feminism in a nutshell as it ignores notions of class and race. Yes, we all have 24 hours in one day but the statement doesn't acknowledge the fact that some people have families to feed and care for with in those 24 hours, some people have to work two jobs in those 24 hours to pay the bills, some people might be turned down from certain opportunities due to the colour of their skin or their gender presentation in those 24 hours, etc.

The future of feminism is will always need to be intersectional, and any brand of "feminism" that willfully ignores that in order to benefit the individual will never truly be progressive - thus the collapse of the "Girl Boss" into nothing but a meme, a millennial version of the "Live, Laugh, Love" and "Karen" tropes for older women.

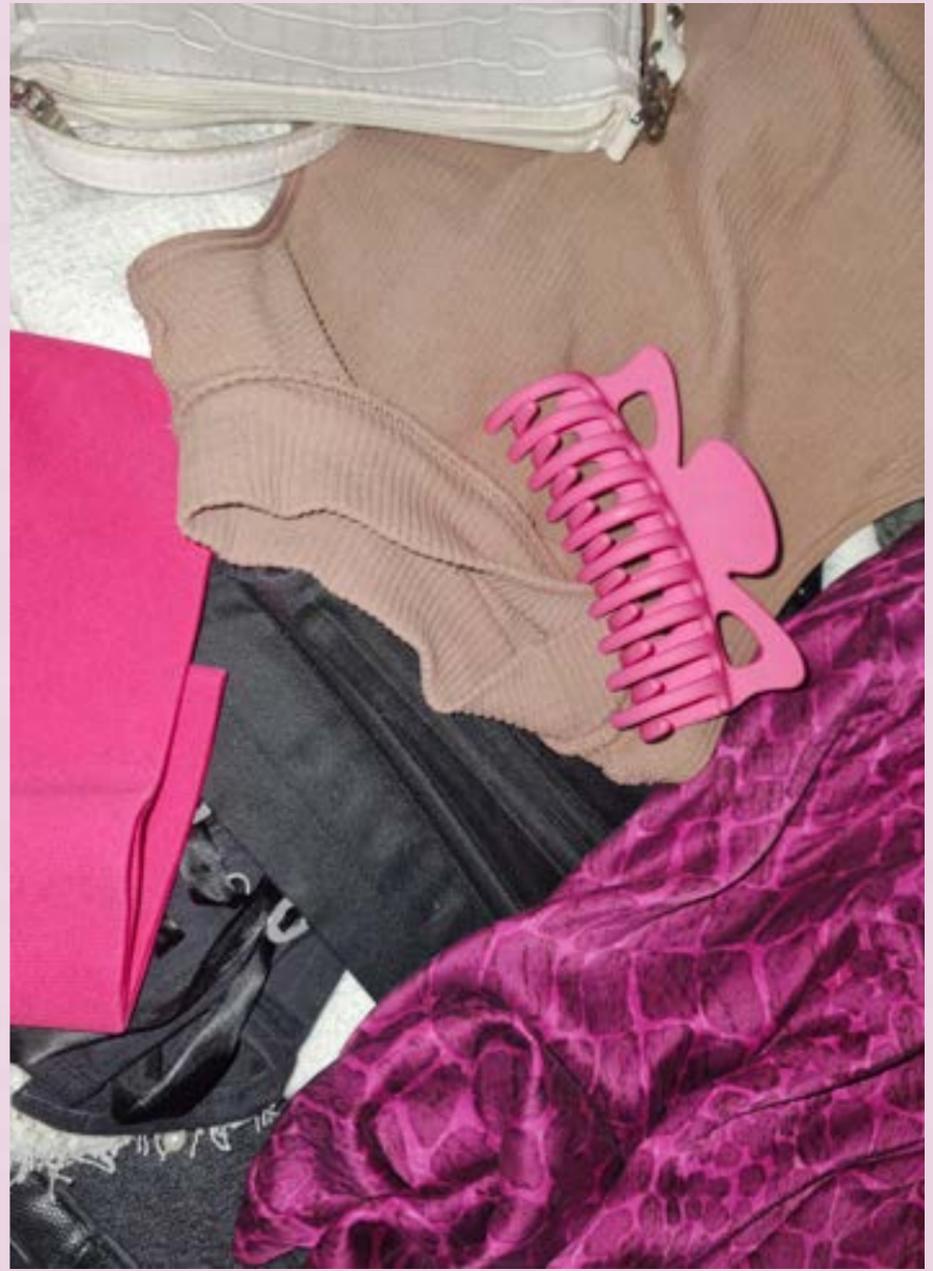


HIDE AND SEEK

images by aliesha matthews

the beautiful mess of the everyday







On Pills and Periods.

Words by Aliessa Matthews.

Last week, I got my period for the first time in probably two and a half years - and it hurt like a b*tch. As part of my mission to reinvent myself after breaking up with my first long term boyfriend (trust me that also hurt like a b*tch), I decided to come off of the contraceptive pill, at least for a little while. At the time it seemed like a great idea - I wasn't really considering how much over two years of taking it would throw my hormones into chaos.

I guess in my head, stopping the pill was supposed to be a reset for me so I could feel more in tune with my own emotions. As many people that menstrate will know,

each different brand of pill comes with its own hefty list of unsettling side effects which can include anything from gaining weight, to nausea and fatigue to *literal ovarian cysts*. The pill I used to take in particular, Cerelle for those curious, lists depression, mood swings and generally altered mood as common side effects - affecting around 1 in 10 people that take it.

I do think since I started taking the pill I have changed quite dramatically as a person, maybe some of that is rose coloured glasses or simply growing up but I definitely don't feel as much of myself as I used to. The first few weeks after coming off the pill felt

almost like the first few weeks after I started taking the pill - a generally very low mood and no motivation to do anything except sleep (I'm told this is also a side effect of a break up).

In about three weeks, my hormones must have started to balance because let me tell you - I felt really good about myself for some reason, I genuinely still can't explain it but I hadn't felt that confident in as long as I could remember. I started to feel a bit more like the person I used to be when I used to do crazy things like dye my hair blue on a whim - and to be honest I didn't even realise I missed that person so much. I actually went to a consultation at a hair salon about dying my hair pink - in that moment I realised I didn't miss the cost of dying my hair.

It actually took quite a long time for me to get my period again, probably around 8 weeks so for a while I was a bit scared I was either pregnant or the pill had messed with my ovaries and I couldn't ovulate anymore. One day I woke up to the distantly familiar feeling of cramps in my

abdomen and those worries faded into a new panic - I forgot just how much cramps suck.

That week I ended up taking a lot of naps, I felt a bit ill and drained and I was SO hungry! It almost felt like getting my first period again for the second time. I didn't think it would affect me so much, I had periods every month for six years prior to starting the pill but it still felt like a big deal. Part of me was glad because it meant that my body had finally gotten back to its natural rhythm, however I also did curse myself a little bit as I lay in bed with a hot water bottle trying to will away the pain. Something I discovered that wasn't around when I got my first period is period yoga - a lucky gem from mindless TikTok scrolling - and it actually worked to some degree? I consider that a success.

In the end, I'm actually glad that I took the plunge to come off of the pill, I feel like the overall emotional benefit is well worth the side effects - I didn't even see that I wasn't my whole self when I was taking it (for me, of course other menstrating people might feel differently.)



... huh?

So,

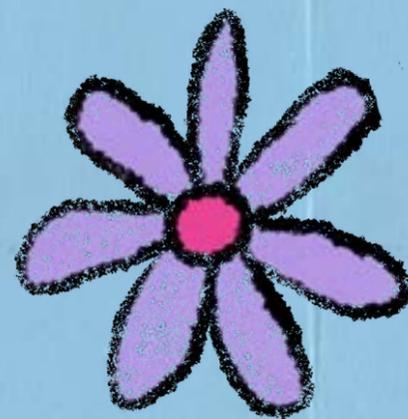
Before you go, I would just like to say a quick thank you to everyone that helped me out during the process of making this little passion project Zine. A huge thanks to my gorgeous models - Wahiba Kafi, Daniela Jimenez and Jessica Johansson! Another equally massive thank you to Emily Avant and Eli Croker who submitted their touching letters to their younger selves. I would like to thank every friend who's mess I've been snapping shots of for the Hide and Seek article - don't worry you can remain anonymous, Pool Ball Thief.

The last thanks extends to you - yes you! I hope you have found something to take from Mary Sue today, and I hope that you have something to give to Mary Sue in the future - check our website for submission info!

That's all, folks

x

C YA!



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