



The Nabokovs
in Montreux,
Switzerland,
in 1968

THE YEARS OF MAGICAL THINKING

At 24, Keziah Weir wants a love and marriage that will set her mind and body on fire, that will create its own story and endure, even as statistics declare the lifelong knot to be undone. She wants what Véra and Vladimir had

My parents have always had a very photogenic marriage. They met young and married early—my mom was 23, my dad 21, both of them freshly minted students of the Curtis Institute of Music, where they'd studied flute and bassoon, respectively. And because their married days pre-children permeated my adolescent consciousness by way of myriad photo albums and the stories that accompanied them, I came to understand that their life together back then consisted primarily of smoking in European airports on chamber-music tours, dining on continental

trains, and hiking in Telluride with their beautiful apricot-hued mutt, Zoe, who wore sunglasses. They were so young, so attractive. As a wedding present, my dad gave my mom a peach-faced lovebird named Lou. Theirs was the first union that I blame for my unrealistic expectations of marriage. The second is Véra and Vladimir Nabokov's.

Like many a good fairy tale, the Nabokovs' begins with a dark night and a Harlequin mask. The scene: May 8, 1923. Russian émigré charity ball. Berlin. Véra Slonim, a black-masked, blue-eyed beauty, approaches a burgeoning young writer, pen name Vladimir Sirin. On a bridge above a chestnut-tree-lined canal, Véra enchants Vladimir by reciting his poems from memory. He is 24 years old, she 21. Almost three months after meeting, he will write the first of hundreds of letters to her—the vast majority of which appear in the recently published collection *Letters to Véra* (Knopf), translated by

preeminent Nabokov biographer Brian Boyd and leading Russian scholar Olga Voronina—which begins: "I won't hide it: I'm so unused to being—well, understood, perhaps—so unused to it, that in the very first minutes of our meeting I thought: this is a joke, a masquerade trick." They would marry not quite two years later, and stay married for 53 years, till death (his) did them part.

Vladimir Nabokov wrote in his *Lectures on Literature* that a good reader possesses imagination, memory, some artistic sense, and a dictionary. A particularly wonderful professor imparted this philosophy to me while I was studying Nabokov's novels in college, and so in many ways it felt as though I'd learned to read from the Russian's ghost. And he was right, of course. Nothing makes reading a book more delicious than uncovering a new layer in a word you thought you knew. His preferred dictionary, *Webster's New International, Second Edition*, dedi-

cates 59 lines to defining *marriage*, and another 20 to *marry*. My favorite definition of the latter is its nautical iteration: "to join two ropes end to end so that they will run through a block without jamming at the joint."

That this institution is not quickly explained makes sense to me. In a scene from Gillian Flynn's doozy of a marital thriller *Gone Girl*, Nick, the husband, is looking for an out from his, er, difficult relationship with Amy, his wife, and says:

I FOUND OUT ABOUT VLADIMIR'S AFFAIR AND THOUGHT, IF *THIS* MAN, WITH *THIS* LOVE, COULDN'T KEEP IT IN HIS PANTS...HOW COULD VÉRA TAKE HIM BACK AFTER A BETRAYAL LIKE THAT?

"Yes, I loved you. But then all we did was resent each other, try to control each other. Cause each other pain." Amy, like an exhausted mother talking to a dense child, deadpans, "That's marriage."

Phyllis Rose, in her 1984 classic *Parallel Lives*, examined five Victorian marriages, each made up of at least one writer. "We are desperate for information about how other people live because we want to know how to live ourselves," Rose writes, "yet we are taught to see this desire as an illegitimate form of prying." If her close read of those couples is like overhearing gossip in a locker room, *Letters to Véra*, a five-decade epistolary love story, is like being handed a celebrity's unlocked iPhone. Pry away.

For the Nabokovs, love and marriage really did go together like a horse and the thing that goes with the horse—or, better, they went together like Vladimir and Véra. To summate the couple's delighted mutual entanglement is nearly impossible, but here goes: Between meeting her and sending that initial letter, he wrote a poem about their first encounter, which was published in the same prominent literary journal, *Rul'*, where she'd first read his verse. It begins, "Longing, and mystery, and delight.../as if from the swaying blackness/of some slow-motion masquerade/onto the dim bridge you came./And night flowed, and silent there floated/into its satin streams/that black mask's wolf-like profile/and those tender lips of yours." Once married, the pair hunted butterflies together, his favorite pastime, in Germany, Switzerland, and across the United States. They shared a particular form of synesthesia;

what Vladimir once explained to a BBC reporter as "this rather freakish gift of seeing letters in color." She was his muse, his editor, typist, translator, driver, and bookkeeper. She was the mother of their only child. Beginning with his autobiography, published in 1951, he dedicated each of his books to her ("To Véra" are the first words the reader sees), and bright apparitions of their union appear over and over in his novels' most loving relationships: from the elderly poet and

his indispensable wife in *Pale Fire* to the incestuous, long-suffering, star-crossed heroes of *Ada, or Ardor: A Family Chronicle*.

As a private English tutor, and later a guest lecturer, Vladimir spent significant stretches of time away from Véra. He wrote her almost every day, his letters brimming with adoration. Pre-marriage, July 1923: "Yes, I need you, my fairytale. Because you are the only person I can talk with about the shade of a cloud, about the song of a thought." A year later, "I'm so infinitely used to you that I now feel myself lost and empty: without you, my soul." Just after their first anniversary, and employing one of the dozens of pet names he would create over the years, he wrote, "Tuftikins, I've decided to kiss you at the end of my letter. Wait, don't move...No, wait"; and in a particularly racy moment, "I kiss you—but won't say where, there are no words for that." Another time he recounts telling a friend, "I would not have written a single novel without my wife"; his friend responds, "Yes, we've already heard how she helps you." Twelve years into their marriage, their son Dmitri a newborn, Vladimir writes a letter to his wife that begins, "My only love," and concludes, "I kiss your hands, your sweet lips, your little blue temple."

This next bit is hard to write without qualifying: I think it's pretty well established that it's not, like, *in* these days to aspire to marriage—but that, in the previous paragraph? *That*, I want. While in many ways I've never been happier to be unattached—for the first time, I don't feel that I *should* have a boyfriend—these letters, man... I want to know what it's like to ignite that kind of need in another

human. I want to admire a man's brain and daydream about getting him naked. Because that's the thing about Véra and Vladimir—and you don't need a dictionary to know that he's consumed by her physically, emotionally, mentally. It's been a few years since I've felt the kind of constant, raw desperation that accompanied my last long-term relationship and that I tend to equate with romantic love. Maybe adults don't love like that, I thought. Until I read the letters.

Themes emerge when I start to tick through former relationships, whether boyfriends or flings or the things in between. It is strange, for someone who writes for a living and loves words as I do, that I've rarely been involved with someone who likes to read. Were I the analytical type, I might see this as self-defeating. I'm also fairly risk-averse when it comes to matters of the heart. I do not pursue. Rejections and endings are to be expected and feared. When I pay for bouquets from the corner bodega, I'm already mourning that they'll at some point wilt. Yet because I've always admired my parents, for a long time I expected that, like them, I'd marry early. But I'm still single at 24, no surprise, statistically. Yet if the average New York woman marries at 29 (she does) and the average length of a relationship pre-proposal is around three years (it is) and the average engagement is about 15 months (yup), I'm getting down to the wire here.

That my parents were still married by the time I was in college made me something of an anomaly. That they still liked each other was stranger still. Child psychologists and various religions have long debated the effect that so-called broken homes will have on children of divorce: How will they know what a healthy relationship looks like? But what about the kids whose parents embodied the marital ideal? Who didn't fight, or leave, but instead took us to Europe and Telluride and quit smoking so that we could keep doing those things? Who still have lunch dates during rehearsal breaks (he plays with the San Francisco Symphony, she the San Francisco Ballet orchestra)

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nearly all of them—some multiple times—and can safely make a few generalizations. The women aren't necessarily less partisan than the men, but they're more inclined to listen and try to understand the other side. Many of the chairs and ranking members have visited the home states of their counterparts in the opposite party; all insist on regular meals with them to foster relationships. Fellow female senators are almost always their first call when they need partners across the aisle or advice on how to approach other members. They rarely campaign against one another, despite party lines, and have an informal agreement not to criticize one another publicly.

It's ironic that women are practically the only ones in Washington who still do business the old-fashioned way: by connecting and building trust. "You need to get to know people in order to deal with them, and there's not a lot of that right now," Ryan says. "For instance, I've only ever spoken to [Senate Majority Leader] Harry Reid once in my life, and that was two minutes talking about Reno, Nevada, at the inauguration. So that doesn't lend itself to working together. Patty and I...I've got her cell phone; we text each other."

Patty Murray didn't start out to be a politician. Born Patricia Lynn Johns, she and her twin sister were two of seven children. Her father was a World War II veteran and Purple Heart recipient, and all the kids worked in his five-and-dime on Main Street in Bothell, Washington. Patty went to Washington State University, where she met Rob Murray; they married after they graduated in 1972. They had two kids, and Patty settled into the life of a soccer mom: teaching and carpooling in her childhood hometown. Then, in 1980, the state cut funding for preschool programs. Murray was aghast. So she bundled her kids, ages one and three, into the car and drove 75 minutes for her first visit to the state capital, Olympia.

"So I was going around the hall and finding who I could talk to, and one state legislator said, 'That's a nice story, but you're just a mom in tennis shoes,'" she recalled. "He dismissed me because I didn't look like what they thought everybody important should look like. So I drove home and started calling all the other moms, and they called the moms they knew—all were mad—and we were back at the state legislature." The resulting grassroots campaign restored the cuts. Murray knew she could make a difference, and went on to win elections to her school board and to the state Senate—and then came Anita Hill's televised testimony during Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas's 1991 Senate confirmation hearings. "It was so stark, watching these men grill this woman in these big chairs and looking down at her," Murray says. At an event that evening, she found that Hill's humiliation was all women wanted to talk about. "And I just said, I am going to run for Senate."

The next year, 1992, Murray and three other women were elected, tripling the size of the female contingent in the Senate to six; seven months later, Republican Kay Bailey Hutchison became number seven when she won a Texas special election. When Murray arrived, there was no family medical leave in America. Federal funding for breast cancer research was a paltry \$100 million a year. There was no state medical insurance for poor children; no support for equal pay; and no national law protecting women from domestic violence.

During her first year in office, the Senate was debating the Family and Medical Leave Act, a bill that the women had pushed hard. Murray took to the floor and spoke about a dear friend who'd been forced to quit her job to care for her dying son, nearly bankrupting her family. As Murray left the chamber, an older male senator buttonholed her. "We don't tell personal stories here," he admonished. Murray replied that she had no intention of stopping. "Years later, he apologized and thanked me," she says. "He realized that highlighting the real impact, that's how we help people understand what we're doing."

Women were kept out of certain caucuses and meeting rooms, and they didn't even get their own bathroom off the Senate floor until the end of 1993. When women rose to speak, male senators often interrupted, chiding them for their lack of knowledge or experience. While California's Dianne Feinstein was debating a ban on assault weapons in the mid-1990s, Idaho Republican Larry Craig piped up: "The senator from California, in her arguments tonight, I must say, was somewhat typical of those who study the issue for the first time. The senator from California needs to become a little more familiar with firearms and their deadly characteristics."

Feinstein quickly retorted: "I am quite familiar with firearms. I became mayor as a product of assassination. They found my assassinated colleague and you could put a finger through the bullet hole. I proposed gun control legislation in San Francisco. I went through a recall on the basis of it. I was trained in the shooting of a firearm when I had terrorist attacks with a bomb at my house when my husband was dying, when I had windows shot out."

The women endured frequent slights, insults, and dismissive behavior, not to mention an occasional groping from the notorious Strom Thurmond, who, according to several Senate staffers, once felt up Murray on the senators-only elevator. Minnesota's Amy Klobuchar tells of being ordered off that same elevator in 2007 by a male senator (whom she won't name): "This elevator is for senators only!" he barked. And as recently as 2010, New Hampshire Republican Kelly Ayotte, the only woman elected to the Senate that year, was walking in the Capitol with Florida Republican Marco Rubio when an aide approached and reminded him that he and his wife needed to get an ID. "I think Marco was more embarrassed than I was," Ayotte says, smiling.

Yet the women were steadily growing in power. Senate leadership positions, which confer the authority to hold hearings and set the legislative agenda, only come to those who wait: They're doled out by seniority, and senators serve six-year terms. So it took Murray 14 years, but in 2007, she joined the leadership: chairing the Democratic caucus, the party's fourth-highest position in the Senate. Yet even then, she wasn't always included in critical negotiations. One night in 2011, at the end of the failed attempt to pass the so-called Grand Bargain—a sweeping bill to reduce the deficit by raising tax revenues and cutting spending—Majority Leader Reid summoned her to the Capitol at 11 p.m. Murray walked into a room full of men who'd been up for days trying to avert defaulting on the U.S. debt—yet no one had invited her to the confab, until they decided they wanted a woman's perspective. The men informed her that they'd struck a deal with House Republicans, except for this little matter of cuts to Planned Parenthood.

Murray hit the roof. "‘Absolutely not,' I told them. 'I'd rather default on our debt.'" Over the next three days, she organized four press conferences with female members to highlight the importance of Planned Parenthood—for contraception, mammograms, and children's health, as well as abortions. The funding was saved.

By 2013, Murray was chair of the powerful Budget Committee, and that year, for the first time ever, women headed 11 of the 20 Senate committees. California's Barbara Boxer helmed both the Select Ethics Committee and the Committee on Environment and Public Works; Michigan's Debbie Stabenow headed the Agriculture Committee; Louisiana's Mary Landrieu first chaired the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Committee and then the Energy and Natural Resources Committee; Feinstein had the Select Intelligence Committee; Washington's Maria Cantwell ran the Committee on Indian Affairs; Alaska Republican Lisa Murkowski was the ranking member on the Energy Committee; Maine's Susan Collins was the top Republican on the Aging Committee; and the longest-serving woman in Congress, Barbara Mikulski, ruled the powerful Appropriations Committee with an iron fist. ("We're all afraid of her," Reid once commented.) These days, when women gather on the Senate floor during votes, the men fret over it, McCaskill says. "They worry that we're scheming, and we are." She laughs. Even with a critical mass of 20, women are seen as a kind of oddity, a disruption to normal business.

Murray's negotiations with Ryan in 2013 were the legacy of the failed Grand Bargain. When the Senate didn't reach a deal in 2011, they passed what became known as the sequester: \$1.2 trillion of automatic, across-the-board cuts to the Pentagon and entitlement programs like Social Security. The sequester was designed to be so unacceptable to both parties that they'd compromise on a real budget, but it quickly became evident that the cuts were preferable to the pain of negotiating another deal. The result was a continuing series of temporary fixes—and a perpetual state of fiscal brinkmanship.

By the time President Obama won reelection in 2012, however, the country was thoroughly sick of threatened defaults and fiscal cliffs, and Congress passed a six-month extension to fund the government until September. The idea was to give Murray and Ryan's budget process some time (and to allow Congress to turn to issues such as gun control and immigration). The first step for Murray and Ryan was to get their respective chambers to pass budgets—documents that they could then work with to reach a compromise.

Her job was harder than his at this stage. The Democrat-controlled Senate feared that Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell would amend the budget either to strip funding from Obamacare or to force votes on issues that would be tough on Democrats up for reelection. So to win her party's support, Murray had to convince Majority Leader Reid that she could protect both the Affordable Care Act and vulnerable Democrats. "I don't think [Ryan] ever believed that I was going to get a budget," she says. "He knew that I was going to try."

Murray and many female senators legislate using what former Arkansas senator and long-time Murray friend Blanche Lincoln dubs "the PTA strategy." Put simply, they split up the work and delegate—a "high-effort, consensus-building" tactic that helps women tackle large,

divisive issues more effectively than men, at least according to one Vanderbilt University study. For Murray, that meant instead of hoarding power as committee chair, she deputized her committee members such as Stabenow and freshman Tammy Baldwin, a Wisconsin Democrat, to track the hundreds of pending amendments, especially those that the Republicans were churning out.

The PTA strategy worked. After considering hundreds of amendments, and voting on 70, Murray won passage of her budget by a vote of 50–49 on March 23, 2013. Earlier that same week, Ryan got his budget through the Republican-controlled House. They'd each won round one, but the leaders of both parties now had to designate conferees to help iron out differences between the two versions. Democrats named their negotiators, but after four years of clamoring for a budget, the Republicans suddenly grew leery. Texas Senator Ted Cruz charged that the budget-conference process was a ploy by Democrats to raise taxes. Ryan was stuck, and over the next six months, Murray went to the Senate floor 21 times to demand that Republicans name conferees and begin negotiating.

It was during this time that the women of the Senate got down to business. Barbara Boxer saw through a \$12.5 billion water resources bill and \$54 billion transportation legislation; Stabenow got a gigantic \$955 billion farm bill passed; Mikulski shepherded through more than a dozen appropriations bills; and all 20 women came together to ensure reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act. But at the end of September, everything ground to a halt. Bomb-thrower Cruz, already eyeing a 2016 presidential bid, had been encouraging House conservatives to shut down the government by refusing to give Ryan and the other Republican leaders enough votes to pass a budget bill unless Democrats defunded Obamacare. The Tea Partiers, eager for a fight, agreed. The government closed on October 1.

For the next week, senators paraded across the floor talking angrily past one another, and communication between the parties completely dried up—among the men, that is. A week into the shutdown, the female senators had one of their dinners in New Hampshire Democrat Jeanne Shaheen's offices and, over pizza and wine, half-joked that if the men weren't finding any solutions, maybe they could do better.

The next day, Republican Susan Collins went to the floor to propose a compromise that would become the basis of the talks to end the shutdown. "I ask my Democratic and Republican colleagues to come together," Collins said. "We can do it. We can legislate responsibly and in good faith."

Appropriations Chair Mikulski picked up a microphone: "Let's get to it. Let's get the job done. I am willing to negotiate. I am willing to compromise." Ten minutes later, a third woman rose. "I am pleased to stand with my friend from Maine, Senator Collins, as she has described a plan which I think is pretty reasonable," said Alaska Republican Lisa Murkowski. "I think it is pretty sensible."

A bipartisan gang of 14 senators formed, including six women, to negotiate an end to the impasse. It ended eight days later. The headlines read: "Senate Women Lead in Effort to Find Accord"; "Men Got Us Into the Shutdown—Women Got Us Out."

The shutdown came with a silver lining: Republicans dropped their objections to the budget talks and named conferees. But due to several

factors, not least of which was their mutual respect and commitment to the task, Murray and Ryan decided to negotiate one-on-one. Because they trusted each other not to leak information to the press, Ryan says, they could speak fully and honestly. "[Patty's] not emotional, and she's not lying. Some of these folks walk out of the room, and they huff and they huff. She's not like that."

Murray herself likes to recount how, after she first arrived in DC in 1993, her seventh-grade daughter wrote an op-ed in her school newspaper criticizing her mother's support of a controversial trade bill. Her kids are harder to sell than anyone in Congress, she says, not unaware of the fact that when she plays up her soccer-mom persona, people tend to underestimate her.

Right off the bat, Ryan ruled out raising taxes and wanted to keep entitlement cuts. Murray's bottom line was that no defense spending would be restored without equal increases in entitlement spending. "She was a very tough negotiator. She stood her ground on a number of things. As did I," Ryan says. "Basically, we laid over three budgets [including President Obama's] on top of each other and found the common ground. It was just a smart, methodical process."

Murray adds, "I knew that he had to have a win. I knew him enough to know how we could make a story for his win, and how we could make a story for my win, so that we could reach an agreement." After Congress broke for Halloween, they conducted their negotiations over the phone—stepping away from family to chat or text ideas, lending privacy and intimacy to the talks.

Meanwhile, the Senate was lurching toward its next partisan showdown. Just before Thanksgiving, Reid, sick of the legislative logjam, moved to limit Republican filibusters, something considered so antithetical to the Senate that it was labeled "the nuclear option." The Upper Chamber is an institution designed to work on agreement. Even without the filibuster, mutual agreement is required on everything—the daily prayer, the schedule, whether bills can be debated—and when consensus is lost, time-consuming votes are required to achieve the simplest bits of business. This is what happened when Reid went nuclear. Boom. Both sides stopped talking once again.

One thing did emerge from the Senate's nuclear winter, however. Murray and Ryan's budget deal passed on December 18, well ahead of the January 1 deadline. It was a two-year pact that ended—or at least suspended—the fiscal cliffs. The House followed suit, and the president signed the bill into law the day after Christmas. The two ideological opposites had achieved what (former) Speaker Boehner, President Obama, Senate Majority Leader Reid, Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, and Vice President Joe Biden had all failed to do.

To commemorate all the grief she'd given Ryan over Seahawks star quarterback Russell Wilson (Wilson went to college in Wisconsin), Murray got the player to sign a jersey for him. She presented it to him as a gift when their agreement passed Congress; it's now framed, hanging on a wall in Ryan's home in Janesville.

The night of the November 2014 elections, Murray and Ryan exchanged congratulatory texts and vowed to begin work on a joint bill to create a 15-person commission to study "evidence-based policy making," using data to assess the efficacy of certain spending programs and tax credits. As Ryan had teased Murray at their Super Bowl celebration earlier in the year, "Patty, I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship." ●

and bike over the Golden Gate Bridge together on days off because, why not? I know it's an absurd problem. I do. But just as we pity the children of great beauties and great minds, whose bars seem to be set unfairly high at birth, nothing's more effective at heightening a young woman's anxiety over finding her person than being raised by two people who found theirs. Dmitri Nabokov never married. He had a tough act to follow.

And yet, despite the *Tufikinses* and the *My fairytales*, the Nabokovs endured much marital pain. I've read biographies of both—Boyd's own masterful volumes, *The Russian Years* and *The American Years*, and Stacy Schiff's Pulitzer Prize-winning *Vera*—but reading these letters in their entirety is a new, deeply private thing, like stroking a puppy's soft underbelly and being pricked with the sting of a hidden burr. We're told that marriage is hard work, and that sometimes hard work doesn't cut it. Studies show that two-thirds of recently divorced couples didn't try therapy before splitting, but even if they had, it might not have helped: Thirty-eight percent of marriage-counseling alums divorce within two years. So yes, marriage is hard. But it seems to me—unmarried, unattached—that it's much more than just difficult. Marriage is immense. And Vladimir and Vera's behemoth of a shared life is nothing if not paradigmatic of that.

First and always, there was Vera's health. In June 1926, then Berlin-based Vladimir begins addressing his letters to "Sanatorium, St-Blasien, Schwarzwald," where, as Boyd and Voronina's useful and understated time line explains, Vera has gone to remedy her "depression, anxiety, weight loss." "My dear life," Vladimir writes her, "why don't you write me anything about your new acquaintance 'from Moscow'? Well? I am very curious...Is he young and handsome? Well?" Because only Vladimir's letters are represented in this collection (almost none of her letters to him exist—she destroyed them after his death), Vera is afforded the same privacy in death that she strove for in life. But from Vladimir's letters, it's clear that Vera never wrote enough to keep up with his daily check-ins, and throughout *Letters* his pleading for communication is a constant refrain. "How are you, do you love me, are you coming back soon?" he writes in July, while Vera remains in Schwarzwald. "It is a mystery for me why you do not write, *mais je ne l'en veux pas*—if you don't feel like it—don't write: I love you in any case." A few years later he'll tell her, "Every new letterless day makes me sadder and sadder." (When I mention his perpetually needful correspondences to my parents—I in New York, they in San Francisco on speakerphone, naturally—my dad says, "That sounds like me!")

There were money problems, too, in the early days. And then, of course, while Vladimir went ahead to Paris in 1937, preparing to move his wife and child from Hitler's Germany to France, there was Irina Guadanini. She was "a part-time poet," as Boyd writes in his introduction to *Letters*, "supporting herself as a dog-groomer." And as any cynic (or deep reader) will have already guessed, she was the woman who would cause the Nabokovs to jam at their joint.

Vera, physically slight but a veritable lioness in will, is never so clearly defined in the letters as in the weeks leading up to her move to France, when word began to reach her of her husband's dalliance. She becomes evasive about travel plans to meet him, to which he replies:

"You make me anxious and cross—what sort of a sentence is this, 'is it worth my traveling before you return from London?'" (Reading these is

like being a child listening to her parents fighting through a closed door). And then she stops writing altogether. “What’s going on? This is the fourth day I’ve had no letters,” Vladimir asks, anxious. When she finally confronts him, he replies, beginning with that sweetest of greetings, “My only love,” and continuing, “all in all, this was an especially dear letter (except for the ‘vile rumours).” He then flicks in, casually, writerly, “The same rumours have reached me—and I didn’t doubt that they would slither over to Berlin, too.... Ultimately I don’t give a damn about the nasty things they say with relish about me, and I think you shouldn’t give a damn either.”

Research on extramarital activity is notoriously dicey, with studies finding that anywhere from 15 percent to 70 percent of spouses have had an affair. We live in a time of abundant choice, of friend lists that number in the thousands, of vanishing Snapchats. Of opportunity. Extraspousal intimacy is but a click away. Our attention span, we’re told, is shorter than a goldfish’s. In America, the average length of a marriage fated to end in divorce is eight years. That’s probably because it’s never been easier to end a marriage. Eighty percent of American divorces are blamed on irreconcilable differences—that tie-game conclusion that, as a quick Google search will show, includes any and all of the following: conflict of personality, a lack of mutual concern for each other’s emotional needs, financial difficulties, long physical separation, difference of interests, resentment, distrust, constant bickering, and antagonistic feelings. I dare you to find anyone married over 15 years who hasn’t, at some point, checked off every box on the list.

Boyd fills in the details that went undisclosed in Vladimir’s writing: When Véra reunited with him in France, he ended the affair with Irina. When Irina followed the family to Cannes the next month, Vladimir sent her back home. In *Letters*, like in a good Greek tragedy, any blood spilled is done offstage. I found out about Vladimir’s affair during my last year in college, and to say that it upset me is an understatement. If this man, with this love, couldn’t keep it in his pants.... How could she have taken him back after a betrayal like that? I’m a very jealous person. To my knowledge, I’ve never been cheated on, but I’ve always said that would be the end. I remember telling my professor this, or something like it, and the strange, small smile that my declaration elicited.

By their next separation in April 1939, when Vladimir traveled to London for work, all is again well in their world. “First of all, I adore you,” he writes. “Secondly, I have had the pleasantest of journeys, although the sea was terrible, I couldn’t stand on my feet.” And not only is Véra writing back (“thank you for the lovely little letter,” he writes, “and the underpants”), it also becomes clear that she has engaged in one of love’s sweetest traditions. “My darling, my love,” he writes fondly, “I found the little photograph—it peeked out and smiled,” and then, “My love and happiness (one more little card—the last one I think—found in a tuxedo).” Stacy Schiff writes in *Véra* that five years after Vladimir’s death in 1977, Boyd said to Mrs. Nabokov, “It doesn’t feel like five years.” To which she replied, “It feels like 50 to me.”

As I’m sitting here composing this, it’s still difficult for me to understand how a couple gets through these unimaginably difficult times. Why the blows break some and strengthen others. Ernest Hemingway, one of my first literary loves—about whom Vladimir once commented, “I read him for the first time in the early ‘forties, something about bells, balls and bulls, and loathed it”—was another writer with a famous marriage and an

infamous affair. For Ernest and Hadley, though, the affair was too much. Years later, describing their rupture to a friend, Ernest seems almost baffled by the turn of events, saying, “Hadley was the only woman who mattered in my life, her full body and full breasts, hair long to her shoulders, long-sleeved dresses at her ankles, little or no jewelry or makeup. I adored her looks and the feel of her in bed.” He also lists their shared loves: skiing, picnics, bicycle races, the Tour de France, fishing, bullfights, hiking. It brings to mind that oft-quoted *Gone Girl* passage uttered by Amy: “Men always say that as *the defining* compliment, don’t they? *She’s a cool girl*. Being the Cool Girl means I am a hot, brilliant, funny woman who adores football, poker, dirty jokes, and burping, who plays video games....Cool Girls never get angry.” Véra was not a cool girl. She had opinions, she reproached; when she had problems, she said so. She endured. She loved. I guess the answer to why their marriage lasted was because they both chose to believe it was too good not to.

Although I’ve known the lore surrounding their meeting for years, it wasn’t until I read Vladimir’s letters that its profundity hit home. I love that it wasn’t a chance encounter. I love that Véra made the first move, and such a bold one. Many years later, she showed a biographer a notebook she kept in the years before meeting Vladimir. She’d been clipping his poems for months before that night in Berlin. And I love that when they met, Vladimir was mourning the heartbreak of a recent broken engagement—he couldn’t imagine loving anyone ever again.

I still hope for Nabokovian romance. “Romance” comes from the seventeenth-century French root *romanz*: to invent fictitious stories. Phyllis Rose writes that unhappy marriages are made up of “two versions of reality, rather than two people in conflict.” Happy marriages, she believes, occur when both halves of the couple agree on a depiction of their world. And no one is better at spinning stories for and with each other than Vladimir and Véra Nabokov, who viewed their life together as a puzzle to solve—literally. In that hard early separation, while Véra tried to kick her depression, Vladimir began including mental games in his missives: a crossword in the shape of a butterfly, a “Goat’s Skull” maze. There’s such poignancy in the way that they, rather than sliding past conflict in times of strife, leaned into the friction. They embraced the complicated, seeming to love each other more deeply as they grew older. At 43, Vladimir addresses her as “my priceless darling.” At 70, she is his “gold-voiced angel.” They chose to face the monster of marriage head on, to understand and be understood.

The novels he wrote to Véra, with Véra, are what I continually turn to in the wake of my own heartaches. They’re a salve for loneliness, for despair. They’re books that reward hard work, and no matter how many times I read them, I keep turning up brilliant Easter eggs. And so, for perhaps the nerdiest sentence I’ve ever committed to paper: I think that when I meet a man who makes me feel and think the way reading these books does, I’ll have found my person.

“You’re just in love with your idea of him,” people will say to their lovesick friends. But what else do we have to go by in this life, if not our ideas? One day, 20 years into their marriage, Vladimir added a whimsical end note to a long letter that describes catching butterflies, a college faculty function, and a midday walk: “By the way, a small experiment in telepathy. Focus and try to tell me which two pictures are hanging in my room.” There’s no doubt in my mind he believed Véra could. ●

FRESH PRINCE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 305

sect that loves the brand but sometimes can’t afford it.” This month, the high street store will also introduce a companion perfume with top notes of white jasmine, Balmain x H&M Fragrance, which Rousteing promises “will make this world complete.”

Notably, Rousteing is the only black designer ever to head a major French fashion *maison*. He was adopted as a one-year-old by white parents, an optician mother and port manager father, who raised him in “really conservative” Bordeaux, France. His mother was “open-minded,” he says, but pushed him to be “the perfect boy, well-dressed, the best at school, and good-looking.” It was his grandmother who ignited young Olivier’s lust for fashion. She sketched her tights on her skin before she had the money to buy real ones and, once she could afford it, wore YSL Tailleur, carried Chanel bags, and, as it happens, loved Balmain. As a child, he spent hours drawing “the wonder woman of the new world,” eventually pursuing his passion at Paris’s École Supérieure des Arts et Techniques de la Mode. At 18, Rousteing left school, moved to Italy, and enlisted at Roberto Cavalli, working his way up from intern (while moonlighting as a nightclub dancer to pay the rent) to head of Cavalli’s women’s collection in just five years.

In 2008, he moved to Paris and to Balmain, where he worked for two years as the women’s ready-to-wear designer under Christophe Decarnin, who headed the atelier from 2005 to 2011. Rousteing was only 24 when he was plucked to take the reins. Since then he has set the house that Pierre built in 1945 on fire, aggressively carving a streetwise, show-biz-savvy digital-era superbrand out of an atelier that once dressed the likes of Ava Gardner and Brigitte Bardot. If he is prone to lavish pronouncements—“I’m like a French prince of pop-fashion culture”—they are not unjustified. Under his leadership, the storied French company has evolved into a global phenomenon with profits that have tripled, an unusually young clientele for a luxury brand (its sweet spot is ages 30 to 45), and a recently opened store in London’s Mayfair neighborhood, soon to be followed by a boutique in New York’s SoHo.

In many ways, Rousteing sees himself as a latter-day incarnation of Pierre Balmain, who pushed women’s postwar freedom with what were radical silhouettes at the time. Balmain dressed the jet set, embraced couture as well as new techniques and fabrics, and even claimed to have been the first to pioneer the New Look shape of postwar Paris.

Under Decarnin, Balmain became known for a certain rock ’n’ roll *riche*—lavish beadwork, exorbitantly priced denim—beloved by then-nascent Russian street-style stars and oligarch girlfriends. Rousteing has moved toward party-circuit pieces that marry ’70s-style tailoring, ’90s decadence, and hip-hop bling. “I want to keep the luxury and richness, but the world is all about digital and the future, so I’m just combining those two elements to make couture more modern.” That said, he acknowledges, “Sometimes people don’t get it. They’re like, ‘Oh, Balmain is more American than French.’ I think Balmain is a French international luxury house. It is a house that talks to the world.”

Say what you will about his fish-face selfies posted on Balmain’s official feed, Rousteing hopes to go beyond democratizing Balmain to diversifying the entire industry. He casts a wide array of women in his shows and campaigns, boldly declaring his definition of the Balmain woman. “She can be Kim, Rihanna, Rosie Huntington-Whiteley, Alessandra Ambrosio, Binx Walton. She can be Taylor Swift,” he says. “All my girls are strong, they’re powerful, and they love what they do, no matter their background. My woman is a new glamour Amazon—a Glamazon.” ●

COVERS

Crystal-embellished silk velvet dress by *Giorgio Armani Privé*, price on request, call 212-988-9191.

VISUAL NETWORK

PAGE 98: Dress by *Marc Jacobs*, at Marc Jacobs stores nationwide. Cuff by *Jennifer Fisher*, visit jenniferfisherjewelry.com. Pumps by *Manolo Blahnik*, visit saksfifthavenue.com.

FIRST LOOK

PAGE 125: Skirt by *Givency* by *Riccardo Tisci*, \$6,990, visit givency.com. Earring by *Phyve* by *Paige Novick*, \$17,042, visit paigenovick.com. Loafers by *Boss*, visit hugoboss.com.

TRENDS AND ACCESSORIES

PAGE 126: Jacket by *T* by *Alexander Wang*, visit alexanderwang.com. Dress by *Oscar de la Renta*, \$9,490, at Oscar de la Renta boutiques nationwide. Watch by *Hermès*, \$11,700, at Hermès boutiques nationwide. Ring by *Louis Vuitton*, visit louisvuitton.com. Arkle boots by *Dior*, call 800-929-DIOR. Watch by *Hermès*, \$11,700, visit hermes.com. Match striker by *Jonathan Adler*, visit jonathanadler.com. PAGE 128: Jumpsuit by *Fendi*, visit fendi.com. Earrings by *Gianni Versace*, \$7,565-\$16,097 (per pair), collection at Bachendro’s Galleria (Dallas). Pumps by *Jimmy Choo*, call 866-324-6687. Mule by *Charlotte Olympia*, visit charlottelympia.com. PAGE 132: Blazer by *Dolce & Gabbana*, \$9,900, at select Dolce & Gabbana boutiques nationwide. Ring by *Van Cleef & Arpels*, visit vancleefarpels.com. Earrings by *Cartier*, at select Gucci stores nationwide. PAGE 149: Necklace by *Boucheron*, price on request, collection at Neiman Marcus (Beverly Hills). Dress, shirt by *Boss*, call 800-HUGO-BOSS. Pump by *Christian Louboutin*, visit christianlouboutin.com. PAGE 150: Handbag by *Chanel*, \$16,800, call 800-550-0005. Necklace by AS29, \$68,955, visit a29.com. PAGE 154: Cuffs by *David Webb*, \$19,500 each, at David Webb (NYC). Watch by *Ralph Lauren*, \$14,000, call 877-639-7934. Ring by *Catherine Peacock*, \$6,200, visit catherinepeacock.com. Earclips by *Vhernier*, \$6,750, at Vhernier (Miami). Earrings by *Raphaële Canot*, \$6,075, collection at Dover Street Market (NYC). Pendant, necklace by *Jennifer Alfano*, collection at fortyfiveten.com. Bracelet by *Jennifer Meyer*, \$6,500, collection at ylang23.com. Earrings by *Irene Neuwirth*, \$5,260, to special order at Irene Neuwirth (West Hollywood). PAGE 156: Watch by *Hermès*, visit hermes.com. Watch by *Dior Timpteles*, visit dior.com. PAGE 159: Ring by *Tamara Comolli*, at Tamara Comolli (Palm Beach). PAGE 160: Necklace by *Tiffany & Co.*, call 800-843-3269. Necklace by *Dior*, at select Dior boutiques nationwide. Necklace by *Cartier*, visit cartier.us. PAGE 162: Necklace by *Eva Fehren*, \$5,750, collection at twinstone.com. Necklace by *Pasquale Bruni*, \$6,800, collection at Mayors (Aventura, FL). Necklace by *Pomellato Collection*, call 800-254-6020. Earring by *Aurlic Bidermann Fine Jewelry*, \$5,870, at Aurlic Bidermann (NYC). Ring by *Daniela Villegas*, \$13,750, collection at Just One Eye (L.A.). Cuff by *Logan Hollowell*, \$6,028, visit loganhollowell.com. Ring by *Carolina Bucsi*, \$6,840, to special order at Bergdorf Goodman (NYC). Ring by *Jade Trau*, collection at Hamilton Jewelers (Palm Beach). PAGE 164: Bracelet by *Kimberly McDonald*, \$52,525, collection at Bergdorf Goodman (NYC). Bracelet by *Kwiat*, \$51,700, visit kwiat.com. Bracelet by *G* by *Glen Spin*, collection at Harrods (London). Bracelet by *Monique Piau*, collection at Barneys New York. Bracelet by *Tiffany & Co.*, \$9,800, visit tiffany.com. Bracelet by *Cartier*, \$29,400, call 800-CARTIER. Bracelet by *Oscar Heyman*, \$65,000, call 800-OHB-1912. PAGE 168: Arkle boot by *Jimmy Choo*, exclusively at select Neiman Marcus stores nationwide.

GIFT GUIDE

PAGE 173: Ring by *Elena Vatsi*, \$20,500, collection at Stanley Korshak (Dallas). PAGE 174: Sunglasses by *Retrosuperfuture*, at Retrosuperfuture (NYC, L.A.). Cuff links by *Fendi*, visit fendi.com. Passport holders by *Valextra*, visit valxetra.com. Pajama tank, underwear by *Sleepy Jones*, visit sleepyjones.com. Desk accessory by *MoMA Design Store*, at MoMA Design Stores (NYC). Chess set by *Ralph Lauren Home*, call 888-475-7674. Tea set by *Augusten*, visit shop.neuegalerie.org. Handbag by *Chanel*, \$10,000, call 800-550-0005. Watch by *Michael Kors*, visit michaelkors.com. PAGE 178: Surfboard by *Saint Laurent*, visit target.com. Snow boot by *Louis Vuitton*, call 866-VUITTON. PAGE 180: Book by *Asprey*, visit asprey.com. Book by *Blue Rider Press* of *Penguin Random House*, visit amazon.com. Sweater by *Barneys New York*, visit barneys.com. Baseball glove by *Hermès*, at Hermès stores nationwide. Droid by *Sphero*, at Brookstone stores nationwide. Microphone by *iRig*, visit urbanooutfitters.com. iPhone 6s Plus by *Apple*, from \$749 or \$0 down with 24 monthly payments starting at \$27 (U.S.) and \$31 (U.S.), at Apple stores nationwide, select carriers, Apple Authorized Resellers. PAGE 182: Bracelet by *Aurlic Bidermann*, \$51,830, at Aurlic Bidermann (NYC). Cocktail set by *RH*, at RH stores nationwide. Handbags by *Dior*, \$5,050 each, call 800-929-DIOR. Top by *Talula for Arizia*, visit arizia.com. Book set by *Juniper Books*, at Juniper Books (Boulder, CO). Bicycle by *Galgerni*, \$405,000, visit modaoperandi.com. PAGE 184: Book by *Walker Art Center*, visit gagosian.com/shop. Watch by *Apple Watch Hermès*, at select Hermès boutiques nationwide. Watch by *de Grisogono*, \$20,400, visit degrisogono.com. Table tennis set by *Crate and Barrel*, visit crateandbarrel.com. Bracelet by *Monica Rich Kosann*, \$28,300, visit monicarichkosann.com. Book by *Assouline*, at Assouline (NYC). Travel bag by *Bally*, call 844-44-BALLY. PAGE 187: Bird cages by *Pals Potten*, visit amara.com. Stylus by *Pencil* by *FiftyThree*, visit fiftythree.com. Watercolor travel set by *Schmincke*, visit shop.neuegalerie.org. Book by *Phaidon*, visit amazon.com. Coasters by *Bell’ Inviso*, visit maison24.com. iPhone case by *Buccellati*, \$175,000, to special order for iPhone 6, visit buccellati.com. Bracelet by *Tiffany & Co.*, \$355,000, visit tiffany.com. PAGE 188: Speaker by *Harman/Kardon* by *Harman*, visit harmankardon.com. Speaker by *Marshall*, at select Urban Outfitters stores nationwide. T-shirt by *Polo Sport*, at select Ralph Lauren stores nationwide. Dominos by *David Shrigley*, at Artware Editions (NYC). Gaming system by *Nintendo*, Game Stop stores nationwide, Toys“R”Us stores nationwide. Knife by *Santa Fe Stoneworks*, visit bespokepost.com.

TOUR DE FORCE

PAGE 259: Sandals by *Manolo Blahnik*, collection at nordstrom.com.

SNOW PATROL

PAGE 261: Jacket by *Chanel*, call 800-550-0005. Jumpsuit by *Marni*, collection at Neiman Marcus stores nationwide. Earring by *Loree Rodkin*, \$22,475 (for pair), visit loreerodkin.com. Watch by *IWC*, \$7,000, visit iwc.com. Ski poles by *Bomber Ski*, at Bomber Ski (NYC). Snow boots by *Jimmy Choo*, at select Jimmy Choo stores nationwide. PAGE 262: Coat,

sweater by *Polo Ralph Lauren*, visit polo.ralphlauren.com. Pants by *Ashish*, collection at Susan (San Francisco). Skirt by *Moncler Grenoble*, visit moncler.com. Watch by *Audemars Piguet*, \$19,000, call 888-214-6858. PAGE 263: Pants by *A Détacher*, at A Détacher (NYC). Hat by *Max Mara*, at Max Mara (NYC). Mitters by *Helen Yarmak*, visit helyenyarmak.com. Backpack by *Raf Simons*, visit rafsimons.com. Snow boots by *Moon Boot*, visit zappos.com. PAGE 264: Coats by *Michad Kors Collection*, call 866-709-KORS. Dress by *Moschino*, visit moschino.com. Goggles by *Zaai Optics*, collection at Paragon Sports (NYC). Necklace by *David Yurman*, \$12,500, at David Yurman (NYC). Skis by *Bomber Ski*, visit bomberski.com. Top by *Hilfiger Collection*, at Tommy Hilfiger (NYC). Necklace by *Gucci*, visit gucci.com. PAGE 265: On him: Jeans by *Levi’s*, visit levi.com. On her: Turfsock by *Polo Ralph Lauren*, visit polo.ralphlauren.com. Overalls by *Moschino*, at Moschino boutiques nationwide. Sunglasses by *Persol*, similar styles at Sunglass Hut stores nationwide. Boots by *Bogner*, at Bogner (NYC). PAGES 266–267: Jeans by *A.P.C.*, at A.P.C. (NYC). Coat by *Fendi*, at Fendi (NYC). Snow pants by *Columbia*, visit columbia.com. Necklace by *David Yurman*, visit davidyurman.com. Sweater by *Marc Jacobs*, at Marc Jacobs stores nationwide. Snow pants by *Moncler Grenoble*, visit moncler.com. Earring by *Loree Rodkin*, \$11,325 (for pair), collection at Bergdorf Goodman (NYC). PAGE 269: Coat by *Marco de Vincenzo*, \$6,676, collection at modaoperandi.com. Top, pants by *Max Mara*, at Max Mara (San Francisco). Coat by *Fendi*, \$26,000, visit fendi.com. Jacket, jeans by *Levi’s*, visit levi.com. Hat by *Adrienne Landau*, visit adriennelandau.com.

HIGH VOLTAGE

PAGE 271: Coat by *Fendi*, \$19,500, at Fendi (NYC). Ring by *Parme Marin*, visit parmamarin.com. Rings by *Jennifer Zeuner Jewelry*, visit jenniferzeuner.com. Bracelets by *David Yurman*, visit davidyurman.com. Watch, band by *Apple*, visit apple.com. Handbag by *Furla*, at Furla boutiques nationwide. PAGE 272: Earring by *Established Jewelry*, visit establishedjewelry.com. Necklace by *Elsa Peretti for Tiffany & Co.*, \$20,500, call 800-843-3269. Rings by *Lynn Ban Jewelry*, visit lynnban.com. Handbag by *Jimmy Choo*, visit jimmychoo.com. Tights by *We Love Colors*, visit welovecolors.com. Arkle boots by *Saint Laurent* by *Hedi Slimane*, at Saint Laurent (NYC). On men: T-shirt, tank, jeans by *Greg Lauren*, collection at Barneys New York. Boots from *What Goes Around Comes Around*, at What Goes Around Comes Around (NYC). PAGE 273: Top, shorts by *Chanel*, call 800-550-0005. Bra by *La Perla*, at La Perla boutiques nationwide. Bracelets by *David Yurman*, at David Yurman (NYC). Bracelets by *Lagoss*, \$7,500 (each), visit lagoss.com. PAGES 274–275: Coat, \$29,995, top, skirt by *Moschino*, at Moschino boutiques nationwide. Earring by *J.W.Anderson*, visit jw-anderson.com. Rings by *Jennifer Zeuner Jewelry*, visit jenniferzeuner.com. Handbag by *Coach*, visit coach.com. Arkle boots by *Rupert Sanderson*, visit rupertanderson.com. On men: Overalls,boots from *What Goes Around Comes Around*, at What Goes Around Comes Around (NYC). Tank by *Greg Lauren*, collection at Maxfield (L.A.). Jeans by *PRPS Goods & Co.*, collection at Saks Fifth Avenue stores nationwide. PAGE 276: Sweatshirt, skirt by *Versace*, call 888-721-2719. Earring by *Lauren Klassen*, collection at modaoperandi.com. Earring by *J.W.Anderson*, visit jw-anderson.com. Watch, band by *Apple*, visit apple.com. Tights by *Emilio Cavallini*, visit emiliocavallini.com. Arkle boots by *Stuart Weitzman*, at Stuart Weitzman (NYC). PAGE 277: Dress by *Miu Miu*, visit miumiui.com. Earring by *Lacoste*, at Lacoste (Miami). Earring by *J.W.Anderson*, visit jw-anderson.com. Ring by *Parme Marin*, visit parmamarin.com. Ring by *Jennifer Zeuner Jewelry*, visit jenniferzeuner.com.

LIFTOFF

PAGES 278–279: Bracelet, ring, \$27,800, by *Van Cleef & Arpels*, at Van Cleef & Arpels (NYC). Bracelet by *Tiffany & Co.*, call 800-843-3269. Rings by *Chopard*, call 800-CHOPARD. Ring by *Harry Winston*, call 800-988-4110. PAGE 282–283: Pumps by *Paul Andrew*, collection at saksfifthavenue.com. Earrings by *Chopard*, visit us.chopard.com.

A FEW GOOD MEN

PAGE 288: Cotton denim jacket, \$88, jeans, \$68, by *Levi’s*, visit levi.com. Styled by Yashua Simmons; grooming by Jordan Long for Exclusive Artists Management for SKII.

WOMEN IN ART

PAGE 295: Coat by *Dior*, at Dior boutiques nationwide. Vest by *Victor Alfaro*, collection at net-a-porter.com. PAGE 297: Dress by *Narciso Rodriguez*, similar styles at Barneys New York. Rhodium and lucite earrings by *Alexis Bittar*, at Alexis Bittar boutiques nationwide. Ceramic, ivory, and gold bangles by *Ginette NY*, at Ginette NY (NYC). Rose gold ring by *Vhernier*, \$5,500, at Vhernier (Beverly Hills, Miami). PAGE 300: Dress by *LaVivi*, at select Barneys New York stores nationwide. White gold and diamond earrings by *Jade Trau* for *Forevermark*, \$5,200, collection at hamiltonjewelers.com. White gold and diamond bangles by *Roberto Coin*, collection at Lord & Taylor stores nationwide. Pumps by *Pierre Hardy*, at Pierre Hardy (NYC). PAGE 301: Hoffman wears: Sweater by *Stella McCartney*, at Saks Fifth Avenue (Beverly Hills). Papillon wears: Dress by *Sportmax*, at Sportmax (NYC). Sandals by *Jimmy Choo*, visit jimmychoo.com. Nemeroff wears: Coat by *Zero + Maria Cornejo*, visit bergdorfgoodman.com. Marble wears: Coat by *Max Mara*, at Max Mara (Chicago). Pumps by *Jimmy Choo*, at select Jimmy Choo stores nationwide. PAGE 303: Jacket by *Fendi*, similar styles at Fendi (NYC). Sandals by *Ralph Lauren Collection*, visit ralphlauren.com. Carmen Herrera and Joan Jonas: Hair and makeup by David Tibolla for Chanel Beauté; production by Wanted Media; fashion assistant: Daniel Gaines; *Terেসita Fernández*: Hair by Marco Santini at the Wall Group for Kérastase Paris; makeup by Hector Simancas for Dior Beauty; production by Wanted Media; fashion assistant: Daniel Gaines; *Gallerist*: Hair by Charles McNair at Jed Root Inc.; makeup by Sandra Ganon at Jed Root Inc.; production by Wanted Media; fashion assistant: Mark-Paul Barron; *Margaret Lee*: Hair by Charlie Taylor for Hair Story at Honey Artists; makeup by Deanna Haġan at Kate Ryan Inc.; production by Wanted Media; fashion assistant: Yashua Simmons; *Catherine Opie*: Production by Wanted Media; *Anne Pasternak*: Hair by Marco Santini at the Wall Group for Kérastase Paris; makeup by Hector Simancas for Dior Beauty; production by Wanted Media; fashion assistant: Daniel Gaines; *Ganzer*: Hair by Charles McNair at Jed Root Inc.; makeup by Sandra Ganon at Jed Root Inc.; production by Wanted Media; fashion assistant: Mark-Paul Barron; *Margaret Lee*: Hair by Charlie Taylor for Hair Story at Honey Artists; makeup by Deanna Haġan at Kate Ryan Inc.; production by Wanted Media; fashion assistant: Yashua Simmons; *Samantha Boardman*: Hair by Marco Santini at the Wall Group for Kérastase Paris; makeup by Hector Simancas for Dior Beauty; production by Wanted Media; fashion assistant: Daniel Gaines.

FRESH PRINCE

PAGES 304–305: Dress, leather belt, brass ring, metal sandals; top, skirt, suede boots, suede and metal belt; trousers, leather belt, brass earrings and ring; dress by *Balmain x H&M*, at H&M stores nationwide.

Prices are approximate. ELLE recommends that merchandise availability be checked with local stores.

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