



CONCRETE OPERATIONAL

THE ART BOOK

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Artwork inspired by the novel by Richard Galbraith

JEALOUSY

HOLLY EXLEY

I am a third year illustration student at Middlesex University living in London with my rabbit and my watercolours.

With this project I wanted my paintings to show the progression of the character's jealousy, almost into madness. I was struck by the phrase, 'pink, gelatinous blob of awful, powerless anger,' and the idea of his anger as something 'fleshly' and growing, almost like a tumour. So these paintings are an experimentation of that.

I wanted to create organic, natural shapes, to slightly suggest organs of the body (for instance one of them is vaguely heart shaped) to show his emotions overtaking his body and becoming what makes him function.

I used a model whose face I could see working with my paintings...but the faces are not meant to interpret the actual characters of the novel. The process of my work often involves a model, a face, something to take from, so I combined the face with

the excerpt to find the series of paintings for the project. I hope you enjoy them.

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JEALOUSY

EXTRACT FROM STAGE 2, CHAPTER 2

They stood at the entrance, robes wafting lightly as the breeze crept through the archway, soon to be followed by the higher echelons of the elite Universal Negotiators. The highest-ranking individuals of their protective sect. The very greatest of men and women left, those that had been party to real Negotiations, those that had helped bring humanity to the position it was at now, slowly resolving every conflict and issue across the known universe. Currently all readying themselves to come and shift through the exhibition set in the peculiar hall. Miles long, seven feet high, flat and claustrophobic, the glowing putty illuminating what were the greatest exhibits of their vast collections.

Richard stood proud, next to his confidant, his greatest friend, and his brother in arms, Jack Rawstone. Side-by-side, rigid under their black robes, heads seemingly floating atop their mounds of dark

clothing, patiently waiting for them to come. To walk through and be moved, to feel and have the first seeds planted, to have the based foundations laid, to begin to understand what Richard needed, and what Jack would help him create. To convince them that they wanted to die, in order to truly live again.

“Try not to worry about the test, Jack. Your resolution was near perfect. You know you’re one of only eight in our generation that completed it at all.” Richard broke the silence, facing forward, his eyes turned, trying to scan for a reaction. “The Moravian Complex is more of an exercise in humility than anything else, the vast majority of apprentice Negotiators see no resolution at all. I fail to understand why you are so disappointed with yourself.”

Jack began to sweat, his straight forehead pushing beads of saltwater through its pours, his hands already beginning to ball into fists.

“Not only were you one of the eight as well, Richard,” he began slowly, “but you understood the negotiation and saw a resolution the fastest. An exercise in humility? You produced the original elucidation, faster even than the first Negotiators.” Finishing abruptly, not turning, trying not to show any signs of his anxiety, of his internal conflict, controlling his emotion. *My greed is my disappointment. The vast, unquenchable greed is what drives me to remain your peer, your friend, your ally, and what is pushing me to terrible decisions now,* his mind pulsed.

“Whilst this is true, I still think it contained an element of humility Jack, just the right amount in fact. It pushed me to realise the terrible consequence of what we have done, of what we have all come to, of what my,” he paused. “Our, ancestors have produced throughout the millennia and now, the punishment we must endure in order to right it all.” His eyes shifted again, he noticed the sweat beginning to run down his counterpart’s forehead and quickly brought his gaze forward.

Silence surrounded them, in the room, the gentle wind whistling quietly as it crept inside and around the closest exhibit pieces. Richard cleared his throat, “What if we could change it all, Jack?” Still facing forward. “What if the millennia had passed under a different light; what if we had not explained everything away? What if we had the opportunity to make all existence bright again, to bring us all into something better, something greater? Something more than just strolling alongside this infinite backdrop, more than a role in a play without end, a tragic display with no audience and no conclusion in sight?”

Jack’s guts turned and his heart pumped, fuzz filled his peripheral vision for a split second. Vibrations in his mind. Every minute he was around Richard he felt soulless, a hollow and futile being, un-

settled and unsatisfied with everything that he was and ever could be.

He tried to think of his successful negotiation exercises, not answering Richard’s question, remaining silent and pushing himself to remember those of which he was most proud. He stood still, trying to remove himself from their present, knowing what was coming, trying to ignore it.

“There are so many possibilities Jack; you and I know how great our people once were, millennia ago. How mighty our race was. How, at the pinnacle of science, we stood and purveyed the universe with our God-like technology, and laughed at the black, because we knew how to control it. It no longer frightened us, or quizzed us; it was ours, to be moulded how we wanted it to be, and we tore at the matter that surrounded us and made it listen to our will. Although Jack, with every great triumph, there is loss.” His face broke into a smile, cracking the emotionless statue he had been, his mind growing with the anticipation of their guests’ arrival. “No gain is ever perfect, Jack. As we have weaved the strings of the universe between our mighty fingers, our evolution has failed to maintain the pace of our science and we have lost the most important thing of all: we lost our fire, we lost that which has driven us, now, more than ever we need answers, we need the likes of Makendrake, we need the next step, we need...”

The first Negotiators arrived and broke Richards flow. Jack’s heart rate grew to a dizzying frenzy, pulsing spasmodically with fear and tension, his muscles clenching and bulging beneath his robes. He forced a dry gulp of frothy spittle. *I know what we need, I know what you think we need, I know what I need, and they are in conflict Richard, you and I are at a wall. My patience for your success is diminishing and my toler-*

ance of remaining underneath your shadow is about to expire.

He coughed lightly and became animated, dipping slightly, bending his knees, as was their greeting. “Alpha-Negotiator Chargreen and Negotiator Sletters, it is our pleasure to welcome you to our Exhibition of Doom, please, walk amongst these initial exhibits whilst we welcome the remaining guests.”

“The pleasure is all ours, Rawstone. I know we are all aquiver with anticipation as to what young Vortigern here is likely to introduce us to.” Replied Alpha-Negotiator Chargreen, the oldest and possibly greatest Negotiator to have ever lived. A mountain of a man, having to bend at the neck in the low hall, his eyes bulged as he smiled down at them. The rows and columns of Negotiation Primes; small, decorated data cells containing recordings of their resolved negotiations, sparked lightly in the dim glow and broke the black of their attire. “I watched your negotiation of the Moravian Complex, Vortigern, a truly remarkable result. One of my direct ancestors was on the original board that was sent to resolve the issue. Producing such a fast settlement is astounding, considering we have not had any true negotiations to push you young men into yet.” He paused. “And, of course, your success is also worthy of recognition, Rawstone.” He shifted his head from side-to-side, looking down at both of them, with a seriousness in his face.

Jack felt his heart sink to the bottom of his stomach and throb, squeezing and concentrating the tension and adrenaline, compressing his anxiety and fear. *I want to be astounding, I want your admiration, I want to be the future. I want kill you and erase your Primes, I want to invert your existence completely. My greed and jealousy will be your demise.* “Your words please and drive us both,” Jack answered finally, looking round to see Vortigern smiling and dipping

even lower than normal. “Please, begin to absorb our collection as we greet the remaining negotiators.”



HOLLY EXLEY





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This book is the collection of original artwork from five artists based around some of the deepest human emotions; anger, desire, love, jealousy and madness.

Inside you will also find the extracts from the novel that inspired them, Concrete Operational by Richard Galbraith.

This collaborative media project aims to help inspire the reader and viewer to absorb the questions raised in the novel and around these emotions.



Cover art by Michael Cranston