

Unicorn Hunting

1. Adolescence

Out of all of the assassins, you have the simplest role. You don't need to be a beautiful girl or a popular one; just be one who treats him with respect. A hoof will almost touch your hand but will tap the top of your desk or nudge your textbook. The unicorn dressed in tiger-striped camouflage will ask to borrow a writing utensil. He'll marvel at your black ballpoint pen with "Santiago Gomez Real Estate Agent" printed on it, something yours temporarily his. Between Power Point slides about the Trail of Tears, you'll notice him glancing over at your bangs, your tits, your eyes, your hands, your tits, your feet, your smile, your tits...

When you look back he'll pretend he's looking at the slides of relocated Chickasaw children or the inspirational poster with the Challenger explosion and the caption: "Courage: It's better to crash and burn than to never shine at all."

After class the unicorn will say that he likes your, well, um, your hair. Smile and reply, "Thanks. I like how the colors in your mane blend together, but I don't know; it's just that I like guys with shorter hair." He'll explain that unicorns traditionally have long hair and don't culturally use hair to distinguish sex but use size, horn length, and well the obvious. Tell him that American girls don't know unicorn culture, nor do they care for the gay-pride Danzig hairstyle that all the F.O.R.s (Fresh Over the Rainbows) have, and he would get all of the girls if he had a goatee and a rat-tail. Pause and tap his nose "Yenno, at least it's better than the all white mane look." As he runs his hoof through his wild, multicolored mane you should start giggling. He'll think you're giggling because you like him.

If he gathers the courage to cut off his hair and ask you out one day, tell him, "Eww! Fuck no!" He'll drift his eyes to one of the hand painted advertisements for student body president hanging in the center quad. With the great difficulty he'll have holding back his tears, he might have trouble explaining how fine it is, because it *is* fine, and everything's cool and in fact better this way in all actuality and that you should probably forget that he even said anything. Don't. He'll make eye contact to see what you're thinking. Fake smile at each other. Give him an excuse to jog trot away. Don't talk to him like before. Don't ask for your pen back. You won't be ready to leave the job to the other assassins and collect your pay/hostaged loved one at the agreed upon storage facility, not yet. Stay around just enough to make this embarrassment linger in his psyche.

Mourning lost love is the second greatest cause of suicide in unicorns between 15 and 30 years of age. Sexual frustration is the greatest.

Now who are you? If you're the guy whose paintings are as meaningless and passionless as amateur minimalism, as the unicorn put it, then the following are your instructions. When your victim sneezes, don't bless him. When he drops something, don't pick it up. When he walks in, don't greet him. Show up to the art room early to take the palette with the hoof-sized finger hole so he has to fumble with a paint mixing tray. Start rumors to spark a fight between him and the other unicorn in school, Alabaster Shadowfoot. The Alabaster Shadowfoot who wears a collar and a broken chain as a reminder of the bondage he had escaped and the prison he is still in. The one who speaks with the Lollipop accent and whose mane is grief-washed white from exposure to monochromatic phosphorous. The Alabaster Shadowfoot who had to place himself in exile from his colonized, magical homeland after jumping off a rooftop, goring the pilot of a military helicopter, and making it crash into another military helicopter which landed on a tank. Alabaster, the school's star runner, who had completely satisfied the childish desire to have a pony of every girl on the track team, the tennis team, the softball team, the chess team, the mathletes, the cheerleading squad and even several girls who had no particular interest in extracurricular activities. Your victim won't win that fight.

Unicorns get their power through love, compassion, respect, and taking maidenhoods; most 3rd generation Unicorn-Americans are easily driven to suicide.

If you're that guy who sits behind him in government class, during the midterm, lean over to your victim and whisper that he's gay. It is not advised that you do this until the teacher steps outside to have her cigarette. He'll try to block you out as he circles letters. As he pulls out two pieces of paper and a pen to start the essay section, whisper that it wouldn't be a problem if he was homosexual, but he's just gay. Very gay. He couldn't be gayer if his mane and tail were rainbows and if glitter and joy jingled out of his hooves when he walked. He'll yell at you to shut up slamming the black Santiago Gomez pen onto his desk. The class will stare at him with raised eyebrows and silence. One girl across the room will whisper about how the unicorn might bring his father's gun to kill everyone like at Columbine. Everyone else will return to their exams. Remind him how gay it is that his mane and tail are rainbows and how glitter and joy jingle out of his hooves as he walks.

When the teacher returns, the unicorn will squeeze through the rows of desks, rendering his classmates a little happier to be taking an exam as his hooves knock against the linoleum like the teacher's high heels. He'll point at you down a path of glitter, whispering with the teacher about how you were calling him gay. She'll shrug, "Well, what do you want me to say? It's your word against his."

The school charter says that teachers should always side with whoever has the better grades.

Use math. When he comes home saying that his painting has won an art scholarship, don't congratulate him. Ask him how much money he won. Then, ask him how much money he spent on the canvas, brushes, paints, and fixative. Calculate the sum of the costs and subtract from the prize money. If this yields a positive number, then ask him how many hours he spent working on the painting and divide the previously calculated difference by the amount of hours spent painting. If the quotient is lower than the current minimum wage, then explain how it's weird that the workers at McDonald's don't come home bragging about how much money they won working the fryer. If the earlier quotient is still higher than the minimum wage, then rant about how art is useless, but everyone uses the rough sides of sponges. Remind him how a male would get his family a stable paycheck from sponge manufacturing and not selfishly pursue his passions. Say how your victim's art is egocentric, and he does not lead an interesting enough life for that to be a good thing. Blame him for all of the problems in your life.

Science has recently proven that this method is, for some reason, more effective if you are the creature's mother or father during execution.

At P.E. when he's sitting on the rotting, splintering, wooden bleachers by the girls who are on their periods, approach him with three of your friends. Ask him if he's menstruating. He'll explain that unicorns aren't allowed to run on school grounds unless they are on the track team like Alabaster, and even then, they aren't allowed to practice on school grounds. He'll continue about how the administration doesn't like the idea of students with piercing objects on their heads running 30 miles per hour around other students. Plus it's hard to sieve all of the glitter out of the sand, and having students run four laps with a unicorn is like giving them each half a tablet of ecstasy before fifth period. Don't let him continue about how he just wants to run instead of listening to the girls complain about how running laps is pointless and stupid even though they'll all invest in at least one gym membership or treadmill by the time they're forty. You'll want to ask if there's anyone he doesn't think he's better than, instead ask him if all fags hate women.

Ask him how his father's doing at the sponge factory. One of your friends will clarify how his father's factory doesn't even make sponges, "They make the rough side of the sponge. Then they ship it to Mexico where they glue it to the other half." Your victim will hide his face under his hooves. Ask him if he's crying. Ask him if he wants a baby bottle to suck on until he can get a nice fat dick. The unicorn will try to say something about mounting your mother and her mounting him, but he'll stammer. Keep heckling him. His words will fail him. Circle him. Push him. Punch him. He'll cry, because he wants to be left alone. He'll cry, because he doesn't want to hurt you. Mock him for it. He'll beg you to stop. Don't stop. Push him more.

When the teacher isn't looking; call him a faggot and pull his fucking pony tail, then his rat tail. Mock him for having a rainbow coming out of his ass. Ask him if he's a horse's ass or an ass' horse. He'll insist that he's a fucking unicorn, a person, not some god damned live stock. Don't go soft. Keep it up. Pull out before the tears of helplessness turn into tears of rage. The dimmest one of you won't get the hint. Whistle blows from the PE teacher will make your victim back away from the oozing holes in your four torsos as the unicorn cries that he didn't want to; his face red, except where his tears have cleaned.

Your classmates will watch in silent horror as parts of your sternum pull themselves out of your heart and your ribcage pieces snap to their proper positions. Although it is impossible to be killed in a unicorn goring, it will be the antonym of painless. Most women testify that the Lazarus Effect of a unicorn stabbing is worse than childbirth, and science confirms that exposure to unicorn horn in the blood temporarily repurposes 60% of the brain to expanding the victim's understanding of pain. The rest is repurposed towards saving this pain into long term memory. Red hairless skin will crawl over the cavity and seal it. You may never be the same, but I'll make you rich. A police man will check on you and your friends as your brain function returns to normal, then he'll take the unicorn away in hoofcuffs.

The punishment for goring a human can be a horn removal, other forms of castration, or even a traumatically stern warning.

Ask your target if he would like to go with you to the Nevadan desert to shoot off this cool automatic machine gun you had bought behind the military surplus store. Tell him it will be manly and bad-ass, like that time he gored those fuckers at PE, even though everyone else gave him shit for penetrating a group of teenage boys and for crying while he did it. He'll start quaking and say something about how that judge's warning had no business being so stern. Make a deal that if he pays for the gas this time, then you'll pay for the gas next time. Talk about how you and him are going to do this like every fucking weekend. He'll ask if he can bring his dad's third generation Colt 45. Tell him no.

Pick him up at sunrise. Tell him he looks surprisingly good with his rainbow rat-tail and his B.D.U.s. "Tiger camouflage," he'll explain, "It hides you from tigers." Swipe his credit card, fill up your tank, and take off towards the Nevadan sky. Talk. Say how he's cool and not like other guys who you gotta be macho and shit around all of the time, but you can just talk about God and life. He'll tell you he doesn't believe in God or life, but he wants to. Tell him your secrets. All but one. Make him set up the targets in the empty desert. Let him shoot first. Once he's out of ammo, stab him with a knife and tie his corpse to the nearest tree or cactus.

A hunted unicorn may come back to life unless it wishes to die. Unicorns are also bullet proof.

2. Extended Adolescence

If you are the sibling of a unicorn, then talk to him about how you feel entitled to as much of your family's money as you want, regardless of the effects on him and the rest of the family. He'll whine about how you spent almost a decade in a party school and still don't have your four year degree and how it is his turn to leave community college and start his own life. Cry. Cry loudly.

When daddy comes in, invent lies. Cry like they're true. If this is too difficult, then exaggerate the truth and omit key details. Say that he hit you. Leave out the fact that it was with a wiffle ball when you were seven and how he immediately said that he was sorry sorry sorry. Have daddy kick him out of the house. Watch him stomp out, jingling glitter and joy with every aggressive step.

While he's gone convince Mommy and Daddy that he needs psychological help according to what you learned in that one psychology class you ended up dropping, because it was too hard. Tell anyone who calls for him that he was caught watching tentacle rape porn and masturbating onto the cat while singing "The Star Spangled Banner" in Spanish, and he is grounded. Take a message; they won't be calling back.

Unicorns have a need to feel unique and special. They will destroy anything that gets in the way of that feeling, even themselves.

If you're the unicorn's psychiatrist, ask him why he's been seeing you since he was in community college but all he still talks about the horrible things people did to him in high school. He'll say that it's because you have done nothing to help him except scribble secretive, judgmental notes while billing his insurance. Tell him that his accusations stem from the trust issues he developed when he was painted with zebra stripes and left in the tiger's den at the zoo, and you've actually been helping him all along. If he says that you're full of shit. Calmly call him paranoid and explain that he lacks the proper perspective to see the truth. Treat his depression by giving him the samples that you have stashed in your closet instead of something more therapeutic. When he comes back saying that he has slept for multiple days and is falling asleep at work and school, tell him that all medications are like that and there is nothing you can do. When he comes back again saying that he has lost his job and has been having suicidal thoughts, tell him that he just hasn't been taking the pills long enough.

Unicorns get their power through feelings of love and compassion. Impotency has been one of the largest causes for the dramatic decline of the modern unicorn population, following suicide and the rising scarcity and monetary value of magic.

Strip down and take your place. Let the little pervs wet their canvases with curves that come together to look something like your body. Add your every physical imperfection to the list of things you will try not to think about, along with your ex-boyfriend and that jury summons you've lost. At break time, put on your robe and get your cigarettes from your bag. On the way out, pause by the piece where you look the saddest. The artist will offer you a suh-suh-sugar cube. Decline. Ask him if he smokes. He doesn't. He'll sit there with brush in hoof. Say, "Don't you ever take a break?" He'll explain that this *is* his break. Say, "Hey, unicorn, come outside with me, yeah?" He'll follow you outside explaining to you that he has a name, and then he'll tell you what it is. He'll ask that you not refer to him as the unicorn. Pull out a cigarette from the box, of course not the lucky; smoke as your victim ambles a bit. "How do you hold a paintbrush in your hooves anyways, unicorn?" He'll explain how it's just like holding a pen.

He'll ask why you got into nude modeling. Be honest: "The only thing I ever really learned in school was how to sit still and shut up. I figured it was a good career move." He'll offer you a sugar cube again. Accept. Talk about movies. He'll say that they're replaying "Back to the Future" at this theater if you would like to go with him and that he'll be your ride, pay, and bring snacks; he'll say that it would be like a date kinda but not really if you don't want. Tell him that you'll go if you can have the picture he's painting of you. Your victim will say that he needs it for his final portfolio, but you can have it when he's done.

Your ex-boyfriend, Trevor, will return one of your 47 calls from last month. He wants to be happy again. Ask him if he wants to see "Back to the Future." When your victim shows up with gel in his mane and smelling of the color blue, tell him that you're sick. After seeing the movie, mail the unicorn a box of razorblades and a picture of you and your more attractive ex being happy.

Unicorns are highly allergic to razorblades.

If you're trying to add Politics Over The Rainbow: When Corporations Buy Monarchs, then you're standing in the back of the classroom trying to glance at one of the enrolled student's copy of the syllabus. When the professor tells you that he won't be adding anyone, thank him in Lollipop and exit. An entering unicorn wearing tiger camouflage will hold the door open for you. Tell him in Lollipop that he won't be adding anyone. He'll use up all of his Lollipop to explain that he doesn't speak Lollipop. In simple English say, "Oh, the class is full. That's if you're adding. I mean. If you're enrolled, then I hope you like reading Edward Said, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, and Rainbow X Sunrise. 'Cause that's on the syllabus, but you would find that out anyway if you—" He'll go inside and confirm with the professor that the class is indeed full. Wait for him to come back. He'll mutter under

his breath how typical it is. Butt-in with “Yeah, right? The magical equine getting thrown out on his haunches just because of the poor allocation of resources by us wealth-obsessed human creatures. It’s like how even though Anaheim is a magic ley-line the construction and expansion of Disneyland has required all of Hollywood to import movie magic from Over The Rainbow.” He’ll say he was talking about how he never gets in classes when he tries to add. Ask him for his number.

Call him that evening; ask him to come over for dinner and to watch the Lollipop news. Tell him that you’ll translate for him. He’ll say that if he wanted to watch starving foals on TV while he stuffed his face, then he would move back home with his parents. Inform him that right now it’s not starving foals. “It’s just some stallion stretched on a rack having his ribs splintered by Gatling gun fire. It’s payback for when the freedom fighters put that human CEO on the Judas cradle last week. You should have seen the terror. It filled me with hope for your country.” He’ll ask if you can do something else. Tell him that he can just come over and see your Lisa Frank original.

Don’t change your jeans or your *otaku* t-shirt. He already saw you in them today, and you don’t want him to think that you’d get changed just for him. Add the beret and the pixel camouflage scarf. Put on sexy underwear. Make sure you’re matching.

When he arrives point out how you’re both wearing camouflage and how down with the cause you both look. He’ll smile. Ask him if he wants something to drink, but use an assumptive close, “What kind of beer do you want?” He’ll ask if you have Stella Artois. Give him a Kirin Ichiban, “It’s the only light beer I have. I know you’re not a Kirin. I can tell the difference between a Kirin and a unicorn. Please don’t be offended.” He’ll tell you to calm down and that it’s just a label on a beer bottle. Transition with, “Speaking of commercialized art. You wanna see my Lisa Frank stuff?”

He won’t know whether to comment on how many posters you have or on the fact that the composition creates a focal point at a framed inked drawing of Markie the Unicorn. Sit on your bed. He’ll sit at your desk. Ask your guest about himself. Ask him why he likes Lisa Frank. He’ll say that she inspired him to paint. Her paintings depict revolutionary ideas of unicorns running free, of his people happy. Her romantic work reminded the supernatural equines of a time before magic was traded on the stock exchange. His father told him that, before Google banned Lisa Frank search results from all of the Superior Rainbow Territories, someone created a Zip disk with over 50 illustrations. Those sparked a revolution. Of course you know that it was actually only 32 illustrations and that actually Celeste Ravenhoof commissioned local artists to mimic the style of Frank, stirring the emotions of the people and spiking enrollments for the Unicorn Liberation

Organization. But let the unicorn talk about how he thought he would change the world through art, but now he just paints how lonely he feels.

Ask him about his foalhood. He'll tell you that he just remembers everything being okay, and then it wasn't. He'll remember hitting his brother with a wiffle ball. He'll remember they mostly played video games after that. He'll remember being quite popular until his mother made him befriend an effeminate boy who had cooties and stole things, but he also had a Sega Dreamcast, so it wasn't all bad. After that there was a field trip to the zoo, and maybe that perhaps it's too personal to tell you about it just yet. Tell him that now he *has* to tell you. He'll mention how philosophy teachers like to take apart a Lego house and ask where the house went. He'll ask the same about the colt he was before the world started taking him apart.

When the fridge is out of beers, ask your guest if he can do magic. He'll explain that magic powers are complicated: a unicorn has to believe in itself, feel love and compassion, have an intact horn, and then there's the whole virginity taking aspect... Ask him if he needs any help with the last part, because, although you're embarrassed to admit it, you would still be a qualified volunteer if he would just get on your bed with you already. He'll say that it wouldn't feel right, that there should at least be a pretense of love or something. Tell him some more facts, "I'm 24. I'm too old for certain fairytales, and you need something else to paint."

When you wake up, he'll tell you that he wants to hold you forever. Get out of bed. Call him a disgusting, whiney, apathetic narcissist. A prototypical example of first world enculturation. A capitalist sell out. He'll ask why this is suddenly coming out now. The unicorn will jokingly ask if someone is telling you to say this. Yell, "No, and it's insulting to women that you think I need a man to tell me what to say!" While he's backpedalling, put on your clothes. Hand him his camouflage. He'll throw yours at you. Let it hit you and fall.

Tell him that none of his problems compare to the problems of his people living under the apartheid over the rainbow. Play a game of compare and contrast. The highlight of his cousin's day is when the R.O.Y.G.B.I.V. Cross delivers his ration of food tablet. The highlight of your guest's day is jacking off to all the women who don't love him fingering each other. The low point of his cousin's day is when all of his earthly possessions are destroyed during the night, and he must move deeper into the ghettos. The low point of your guest's day is when one of his favorite songs is used in an iPod commercial. His cousin's grave will likely be unmarked, filled with debris and other corpses, and eventually turned into a swimming pool for the corporate colonizers to enjoy. Your guest's grave will have a tombstone and an epitaph that will be whiney and self-centered. It will probably be a quote from his everyday life. Then say that he's also a lame fuck.

5% of all unicorns define their first time as disappointing, 20% as traumatic, and 75% could not stop crying long enough to answer the survey.

If you're Alabaster Shadowfoot, then you've failed your Remedial Physics for Magical Beings midterm. After class, follow the unicorn who only speaks up when nobody else has the answer, the unicorn that would be gorgeous if he didn't style his mane and facial fur as if to ward off sexual attention. Tug at his saddlebag and ask him to tutor you. His body will shake as he brings up his nightmares of bleeding out as you urinate on his belongings while the other kids laugh and videotape. Hoof one of your golden chains and apologize. Comment on how he's healed up nicely. He'll tell you to, pretty please with sugar on top, leave him the fuck alone. Say in your accent, "I wish I had so many friends that I could turn new ones away." Your victim will call you a manipulative shit-horn. Tell him that what you do to pleasure those you love is your business and probably their business but definitely not his business. He'll apologize and say that he didn't realize you were actually a shit-horn, but he'll still insist that you leave him alone. Ask him whether the loneliness he feels at night in his dorm stable, illuminated by the backlight of a laptop screen as he beats off to pirated episodes of "My Little Pony," is preferable to tutoring you. To sharing a laugh here and there while making some income.

After his parents refuse to lend him rent money but offer him a chance to move back home, your victim will show up at your barn around seven naming a price per hour and demanding cash up front. Unzipping his saddlebag and spreading books on the floor, he'll explain that he had lost his job at the shoe store by falling asleep with his head in a young woman's lap.

Hand your tutor your midterm. When he starts talking about gravity, pull up your pillow and start talking like it's a sleep over, "I hate how the kirin in class acts like a unicorn." Your victim will say that he's not so bad. He will identify with the Chinese dragon's identity crisis. Then he'll explain that all things fall at the same rate, and it doesn't matter which one "wants it more" as you wrote for number five. As he glances through your failed exam, offer him some hay, a pillow, or sugar. Ask if he wants to relieve any survivor's guilt by drinking a drop of monochromatic phosphorus. He'll ask if that's why your hair is white. Tell him about how your hair has been white since you were a colt. Your guest will disclaim that he missed half of the aerodynamics questions and if you still need help, then you can ask Pegasus. Say how Pegasus really needs to quit looking down on everyone. He'll say that, well, in her defense, everyone in class is dumb and someone who writes shit like "anything is possible with love" for number eight isn't in a position to talk. Talk to him about religion. Ask him how he can call himself a unicorn when he doesn't believe in fairytales or magic. He'll start to pack up his books. Tell him you don't mean to judge, and you've just been curious about Unicorn-Americans who don't believe in themselves. Emphasize that you just want to understand your new friend. Ask if he's been in love. He'll say that he has had his heart broken. Ask about Pegasus: "I thought you possessed eyes for her." Your tutor will beg your pardon.

Explain how the language of Lollipop doesn't have the verb to be. "We don't say, 'This *is* my cat.' We say, 'This my cat' or 'I *possess* this cat.' The only exception is when you talk about love. You can say, 'I am in love.' To love is to exist. I don't understand anything else." Your guest will zip up his saddlebag and say that he doesn't buy that you want to study, and he also doesn't buy the whole Whorfian Hypothesis bullshit either.

Ask him if it's easier to go through life the way he does. He'll put his saddlebag back down and question what you mean by that. Ask your victim if he could tutor you into being a love atheist; he'll explain that he's more of a love agnostic. Tell him the thoughts that got you on that rooftop. The thoughts that made you skewer a helicopter pilot. Tell him how your mother blamed you for your family's death. You didn't love your father and sisters enough. Your love wasn't strong enough to protect them from the monochromatic phosphorus. Tell him about the day the rainbows left your hair. Tell him how your father chose to save you first, then went back to the polo field in an attempt to save your sisters. Tell him how your father cast a magic shield to protect them, and when that failed he shielded your sisters with his body. Tell him how your father melted into your sisters' hair and faces. Tell him how your sisters' screamed your name before they melted too. Tell him how your mother left you with the neighbor and minutes later exploded in a shopping mall, how if there was love left in her heart, then she would still be here. Your victim will try to put his hoof on your shoulder but will accidentally touch one of your chains and pull away to scratch his fur through his tiger camouflage.

He'll say that it's not your fault. Give him a lesson in alchemy: when extreme anger and extreme sadness mix together the heart that contains them explodes like a grenade, but only with the absence of love. Love is an inhibitor. Ask him again to teach you how not to believe in love.

The unicorn will hoof his rat tail. The wind will blow and the barn walls will creek and settle. He'll notice the picture of a unicorn mare and stallion, another of two unicorn fillies and a small version of you with a multi-colored mane, before the collar and chains. Two silver frames and four unlit candles. Your guest will admit that Pegasus is actually pretty hot. He'll laugh and comment about how he maybe could look past how flighty she is. Perhaps if she liked him. Perhaps if she made him feel loved and respected like a stallion. Don't respond. He'll add that sometimes she smells like cookies, which is strangely arousing. Pull your pillow tighter. He'll rear, punching the air, and ask if you want to go for a run. Push his midsection, right on one of his shirt buttons, "You think you could keep up? You're not exactly a Man O' War." He'll say that he's better than Man O' War; he's Secretariat. Yell, "How dare you! I have never heard such impiety in my life!"

After a few laps around your barn with his nose right at your withers. He'll trip head-over-tail. A white equine ball in tiger camouflage slapping its flanks in laughter, coughing up bits of glitter and some blood from where the glitter cut his throat. Complain: "At least one of us is getting high. Your joy is so weak it's pissing me off. How many maidenhoods have you taken? Five?" In his laughter he'll squeak the word one. Tell him that he's so pathetic it could be adorable. Tell him that you've never seen him smile. He's always been so moody and a downer. Lean down and kiss him. He'll slowly push your head away from his and chortle that he's not bisexual and that he's ha-ha-sorry-ha-ha-ha. Ask him if his parents know. Watch him writhing with giggles in the dirt, the soil graying his white coat and washing out the colors of his mane. Tell him that you're not mad, but you pity him for being so sexually underdeveloped. He'll cry that his sides are splitting, that he can't breathe, and that he needs you to he-he-help—. Tell him, "No, and I don't think we can be friends anymore either. Your mane is an insult. It's colorful and short, because you lived in peace like a coward while stallions and mares are dying because they are the undesired race in their own homeland. Because we are poor, because we didn't have a monetary system until humans introduced us to a game we didn't need to play just so we could lose." In between gasps and giggles he'll say that he wants to help. "Grow out your God damned mane. Your parents gave up their pride so it could be colorful." Go inside and close the barn door. Cry inside your pillow so you won't hear the guffaws or the gasps for air as his muscle spasms slowly crush him.

In 1979, a gymnasium opened in New York City for the unicorn population. There were mechanical pumps to suck the joy out of the rooms. No one anticipated how quickly the glitter filters would get clogged. There were no survivors.

3. Marriage

If you're Pegasus, then your role is to go to the LA Art Walk. In one of the larger galleries, notice a familiar creature offering hipsters cheese and Crystal Pepsi. Ask the artist why the painting of the sad woman is called "\$7.95." He'll say that's how much it costs to mail a box of razorblades to his house. Ask if the girl in the camouflage with exposed breasts is supposed to be his alter-ego. He'll say that she's just a girl who would be disappointed by all of this first world despair. Ask him why the shooting gallery target with the knife in its head is called "Eating Cactus" and why the ripped canvas with a sponge on it is called "Minimum Wage." Ask him if he has ever taken a remedial physics class. He'll pretend that this is the moment he recognizes you. Ask him if he remembers Alabaster, or if he heard how Alabaster got a right to return home somehow. He'll comment how Alabaster must have done some serious favor for someone really rich to score one of those. Your victim will

add how he himself is not allowed Over the Rainbow, and he's never even successfully killed anyone.

He'll ask what you've been up to. Tell him "Nothing really. I got this government job, but other than that I've just been pegasizing here and there." He won't get it, but he'll smile.

Follow his shows. Attend some of his shows out of town. Attend dinner with him. Attend the movies with him. Invite him to the shooting range at work, assure him that you don't have a knife, if you have to. He'll bring his dad's third generation Colt 45. Put it in your holster and let him play with your military grade semi-automatic Perseus Elites with magic sights. Scream over the pistol fire how great he is.

Attend a place that sells engagement rings with him. Go to his parent's house for dinner. Ignore the *So You Think You Only Like Men or Women: A Guide to Curing Sexual Sexism* pamphlets that his mother left in his old room. Remember, at a unicorn's dinner table, it is impolite to drink your Pepsi until it has been purified into Crystal Pepsi. It is impolite to call attention to the fact that your host's mane is bone white, and hostess' mane is rainbow, but only thanks to a pathetic dye job.

Smile and say, "Well, it's almost autumn," when your future mother-in-law gets the vacuum to pick up two of your molted feathers. She will say that it's comforting that, if her son insists on being the type of unicorn who cannot be taken by men, then at least he'll be tamed by a manish-looking mare. When your fiancé admits his tastes reveal a bit of an Oedipal complex, understand that he's taking one for the team, not agreeing with his mother. Ask where your future brother-in-law is. His mother will say that the drama queen is on a 72 hour hold over some slut who doesn't love him. Volunteer the information that pegusi don't have suicidal tendencies, "We just excessively molt and get so horny we release a pheromone that supposedly smells like chocolate chips." His mother will ask if pegusi have nipples, considering the fact that they all die in child birth. She'll add that her son loves breasts and was impossible to wean.

Take one of your fiancé's hooves from covering his face and say, "The only memories I have of my mom are suckling at her corpse. That and eating all of her feathers. I mean Pegasus feathers taste like shit, but when you're a newly foaled, God damn, are they..." your fiancé will give you a light buck on the leg "...scrumptious?" His mother will comment on how pegusi are quite disturbing for being pinkie, flighty, little horse-bloods. You'll say, "Gee, I've never heard anyone say almost every pegusiphobic slur in one sentence before. You're so...clever."

After dinner his mother will ask if you would be open to a two male three way for her son's sexual health. Your wooden chair will shatter as you buck it into the wall causing the windows to shake. Fuck cultural relativism. She just implied you

would selfishly leave your daughter with an uncertain lineage and future through polyamory. Like you would leave your daughter with a deadbeat who is barely qualified to drive her to the safe surrender station so she can live her foalhood feeling expendable and alone. Open your wings and shout, “Why would you say something like that?! Pegasi don’t do things like that! Maybe a hurricane in your face will teach you to keep your rude, whore-cunt mouth shut!” Your victim’s mother will scoop a hoof of oats into her mouth and sip some Crystal Pepsi as you huff and puff and cry a little. A couple of sparks will come from her horn; then she’ll tell you to fold your wings away before you find out whether roasted pegasus feathers are also *scrumptious*. Yell, “Before? *Before!* My bones are carbon fiber, my blood contains anti-freeze, my lower trachea is the shape of a turbo charger, and I can now do mach 2 in low humidity! You think you can do *anything* before I can?!”

Before either of you could earn a serious assault charge, his father will invite you to help wash the dishes. Your fiancé and his mother will discuss how he’ll feel when he takes your future daughter to visit your grave and who will pay for the chair you broke. Listen to a lecture from his dad about how the soft side of the sponge you’re using is a bit too soft and the rough side is a bit too abrasive, but it makes things pretty. Say that you love it. Ask your future father-in-law where you can buy such a cleaning product and how much it retails for. Go home with 38 sample sponges in the trunk of your car.

In that car, the unicorn will ask if you’ll really die in child birth. Explain that this is why there’s only one pegasus in the world at a time, and if he makes a Highlander joke, then you will carry him someplace very high and drop him. You’ll both laugh.

“If you don’t know that, you probably don’t know horse-blood.” He’ll start to talk, “Don’t say anything. You might hurt my feelings. I’m not proud of it, but... Pegasi, um, a pegasus. My ancestors, well. In a pinch, a horse can be a viable father for pegasus daughters. Pegasus in the Greek myth’s father was a horse, so she was a mode of transportation. My father was a deadbeat unicorn, so I own a car, have a college degree, and used to see a therapist about abandonment issues among other things.” He won’t know when it is okay for him to speak.

Tell him you’ve been on your own for so long that you even miss the family angst. He’ll say that if you liked that, then you can start watching the Lollipop News in English and feel a disproportional amount of guilt for people suffering in one country as opposed to people in similar circumstances in another, but you have to feel guiltier about unicorn suffering. Agree but only if he’ll root for the Anaheim Angels.

Walk him down the aisle: reins in your mouth, bridle over his face. Say some words in front of some people you know, some people he knows, some people you

both know, and some people neither of you know. He'll put the bridle on you and pull your reins. Go on the kind of vacation where you should really tip the hotel maid. Open presents. Send thank you cards while he plays video games and awaits additional sex. Sign the bottom for him.

That name will later be used in an article entitled, "10 Artists Who Used to Be Good." Another completed 9-5 shift of flying up and down the Californian coastline for the NORAD Western Air Defense Sector. Hang up your binoculars, wrist GPS, your Perseus Elite, and your father-in law's Colt 45 (which you'll been using after dropping your other Perseus Elite somewhere over Catalina Island), and your long range walkie-talkie on the Ikea hat rack. Your husband will ask about your day. Say your usual, "Well, we're not at war yet." He'll serve reheated daisies for dinner. Notice what's missing: complaints about the birthing pains of projects, the excitement of conceiving new ones, eye contact, prescription bottles... Notice what's new: left-overs, dark cola, more talk about his progress through video games, and his always being tired. Notice what's not where it should be: replacement full spectrum bulbs for his studio still in the box, the Southern Comfort with the gin and not with the rest of the bourbon... Be afraid, but don't be your foster mother. Fight your victim before he frees himself from you.

At the couples retreat, there will be magic lessons from the French Drop to walking on sunshine. You may have to tell your victim you've always thought his rat tail made him look rebellious and the tiger camouflage makes him look like Fruit Striped Gum went punk rock, but he'll get to walking on sunshine. Fly low. Move your legs and say, "Hey, look I'm doing magic too." He'll smile and say that he needs to concentrate. Let silence be the topic of discussion. Don't realize how high he's walking until a cloud covers the sun and your husband's footing vanishes precipitously. Wrap yourself around him. You'll try to lift him up until the cloud passes, but his weight will be too much. You'll have to glide yourselves down. He'll shout about how you're going to kill him. How you're finally going to drop him from someplace high. Yell, "I'm not that petty, so stop freaking out!" He'll start calling out whichever safe word you two had decided upon. Tell him that you're not the one who stabbed him. Admit that it's noticeable that he's hung like a horse, but it only looks small because his horn is so big. Tell him that you cut everything with knives, scissors, and machetes so that you don't risk exposing him to razorblade dander. Remind him that you love him even though he throws a fit every time you throw away that dried up black Santiago Gomez pen he keeps in a shoebox under the bed. Tell him that you weren't the one who locked him in the tiger den on that grade school fieldtrip. Tell him that you never believed that he would sing "The Star Spangled Banner" in Spanish, no matter how insistent his brother was last Christmas. Tell him you like the pain you see in his art, and his parents were fucked before he was born and that

it sucks, but that's how it goes. Tell him that you also had a sucky therapist who just threw pills at you. He didn't even want to talk about your oedipal complex or whatever it's called when you kill your mother and grow up always feeling like a lonely outsider until you meet a certain unicorn who understands.

Whether you drop him intentionally or accidentally is something that you can debate later with both your spouse and your conscience. Try not to faint at the horror show of his left coffin bone. He'll say that he doesn't think he can hold a paintbrush anymore. Remind him that he's right hoof'd. Your victim will say that his right hoof is having sympathy pains.

Even though you'll insist that you make enough money for the both of you, he'll insist on accepting a job from the purified water company. He'll drink his dark Pepsi and say that it's not about money; he needs you to respect him. Tell him to start painting again and that you like coming home to food on the table. Don't be offended when he slams his prosthesis against the dinner table exclaiming that he's not your fucking wife. Forget that he starts work tomorrow. Come home to cold light bulbs. Think about what you said last night. Think about how you said it. Leave five "Where are you?" voicemails. Leave eight "I'm sorry; please come home" voicemails. Leave three, "Should I make your favorite dinner?" voicemails. The rest can be barely audible sobbing.

In bed, he'll wonder when you two should have a child. Ask, "Could you take care of her by yourself?" He'll say that he's crippled but not helpless. Reply, "We'll let the pension grow a little more, then we'll talk." He'll ask if you two could look into adopting an orphan from Over the Rainbow. He'll suggest converting his studio into a bedroom. Express your concerns about never having had thoughts about *raising* a child and that you're not sure if pegasi even have maternal instincts. He will recommend that you get your tubes tied and live into old age. Tell him that you won't be the last pegasus simply because he's afraid of your death and that unless he becomes the last semen producing equine on the planet, then he doesn't have a say in the matter. Tell him how in that unlikely scenario rape would not be beyond your moral code.

Meet Luna Stardust, your adopted foal. A two year old who prays to the sun goddess three times per diem: sunrise, zenith, and sunset. She speaks Lollipop, French, and American English fluently in addition to whatever Japanese she has learned from pirating fan subbed Anime. The filly is adept in parkour, alchemy, and telling fables of animals disintegrating in monochromatic phosphorus. She is well read in Edward Said, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, and Rainbow X Sunrise. Buy earplugs for her night terrors. When Luna covers the windows with off white masking tape so that they won't shatter into a hundred thousand pieces when bombs explode, and your husband sends her to her room for wasting money, tell him that perhaps it's

not such a bad idea. Suggest that clear packaging tape might look a little better and keep the neighbors from talking. Find the best, most expensive therapist when you find horse breeding manuals and a copy of *The Blood-Horse Stallion Register* under her mattress.

Try to befriend the foal, run with her. She'll complain that it's less joyous without another unicorn. Instead sign Luna up for fencing classes. Sit next to a blonde woman in a green shirt. She'll point out her son saying how he's the one with the *épée* even though his personality is more fitting for sabres. Point your hoof at Luna and say "My daughter just uses her face." Let the clacking noise of fencing swords and diamond-mithril carbonate fill the air for a few minutes. Luckily the coach will interrupt the awkwardness to have you explain to Luna why shouting "Die, usurper of my native land!" is not a proper way to announce your attack.

One Saturday evening, come home to Luna and your husband watching "My Little Pony." Shout, "I was just in a dog-fight! I got a call from One Eager Eye saying, 'There's something here from someplace else' with its coordinates. I was like boom! Mach 2! Flying over the Pacific Ocean, I don't see anything. Then there's a glint in the distance. I'm like 'Holy Hell!' It's three MiG-29's escorting a cruise missile! I ignore the fighter jets and try to stop the probable nuke because I was worried the nuclear fallout would make me sterile, which I know Pegasus' priorities can get a little skewed sometimes. Anyway, so I'm touching this nuclear missile going 'I'm not supposed to die this way. Fuck!'" Your husband will put his hoof and his prosthetic hoof over Luna's ears. Defend yourself, "Alright, seriously? 'Fuck' is probably the first word she learned in English." Luna will shout slogans about how the puppet royal family of the Rainbow Kingdoms should be fucked the way they have fucked democracy, and she will be sent to her room.

Your husband will say how today he reached the third place record for most liters purified during one's forgone lunch break. Interrupt: "You know what? I flew at mach 2 today, and I'm a little too tired to put up with your shit." He'll ask you not to walk away when he's talking to you. "I'm sorry. I just don't care enough to pretend your life has any meaning anymore." Don't get an icepack for your face. Just lock yourself in your room and don't let him hear you cry. Give up on sleeping tonight; you have an early morning tomorrow.

Report to the Boeing transonic wind tunnel at 600 hours. Evacuate the tunnel when a small fire starts. The engineers will report that the turbine broke when it got jammed with feathers; also it looks like you have lost weight, the drag coefficient has increased around your face; if you lose any more feathers, then flight will be impossible; you smell like cookies; and look like you've been crying. "Of course I'm losing feathers and tearing up; the fan is turned up to 11!" The engineer will say that's just mach 1.1 and that you handled mach 3 in the supersonic wind

wind tunnel just fine. Grab the project manager: “Why are you trying to improve how I fly?! I’m faster than an F-16, more agile than a Raptor, require less runway space than a Harrier, and have a better acceleration than the fucking Space Shuttle, and I’m pretty! Quit blowing wind in my face!” Come back 15 minutes later and whisper, “Can I get a ride from someone? I’m having trouble taking off...”

A junior engineer will offer you a ride home, a unicorn named Gentle Winds. He’s more petite than your husband with a long mane with washed out colors and a Lollipop accent. I would describe his car to you, but I don’t know which of his several vehicles he’ll bring to work this day. It’s a 3 hour drive in traffic. Apologize for living so far, “It isn’t that far when you fly at the speed of sound.” Ask him to pull over so you can stretch your wings.

There’s a guard rail and the ocean. Unfurl your wings in the wind. The breeze will take with it an embarrassing amount of feathers. Close your wings quickly and cry. Gentle will put his hooves around your withers. Say, “Do you ever feel the whole world has conspired against you? How did I get to this place? What mistakes did I make?” Gentle will blow in your ear. Push him away and lean your hooves over the guard rail. “I used to jump from places like this; this is the first time I feel like I could die.”

Gentle will pull a binder from his glovebox and tell you that if you mate with him, your offspring would be faster than anything imaginable. “Heh, my husband, can outrace you by five paces.” He’ll explain that your husband can outrun him on the track but in the air a pegasus with Gentle’s build would be capable of mach 3 and possibly mach 4 if they could figure out a way for her to breathe. He’ll excitedly flip through pages of diagrams and charts explaining turning radiuses and visibility to radar. You’ll want to ask him, so go ahead, “Can you protect her? If someone who owns the police and politicians was going to have her killed, because I didn’t do something.” Point your Colt .45 at him. When he flinches say, “You’re bulletproof, remember?”

Concealer hides the hoof marks, but you still feel them there and the fresh ones are swelling. Your husband will mix Southern Comfort with Absinthe and sugar cubes while telling Luna how he was going to be a famous artist before you dropped him and killed everything. Be your foster mother, but take the adopted foal with you. As you pick her up, your victim will ask that you not drop her. Tell your husband that there’s too much alcohol in a house where you’re raising a child; the vacuum cleaner is clogged with feathers and glitter, but joy isn’t a problem; and you are out of make-up to hide the stamps of his failure on your body. Tell him those are just some of the things he needs to fix before he can see you or his daughter again. He’ll ask that you e-mail him the rest of the list. Ask Luna to grab your work things off the Ikea hat rack since your hooves are full. He’ll ask if being alone again is really preferable to being with him.

Open the garage door. He'll raise his voice above the noise. Take this as a form of aggression. Ignore whatever fearful things he tells you. Remain calm as long as he doesn't reach for something sharp out of the tool box. He'll demand to know if someone's making you do this, if this is a conspiracy against him. Tell him you thought you could always love him, but now you just need to think about your own happiness and the happiness of the child he wanted to adopt. Strap your daughter into her booster seat. Your victim will shuffle through the toolbox. Luna will sob and ask if she's losing her home again. Lie; tell her it's okay. She'll say that she wants to stay with dad. Say, "Trust me. You don't." Your victim will put a machete to his neck. He'll say that he's serious this time. He'll say that if you leave, you'll be driving it into his throat. Tell him that you won't be his hostage anymore, but one day you hope to be his wife again. Put the car in reverse. Drive away.