

○ A Winter Survival Guide

Written and Illustrated by Jack Magnus

You Dumb Bitch,
Don't you know it's getting colder? Don't you know the streets
are starting to empty like the branches and their leaves?
Everyone is running, hiding, burrowing into their own blankets,
and you are not prepared, child.

Trust me this is gonna be great. You need this. Socialization is going to be your new source of vitamin d, because she doesnt exist anymore. Instead, you need a pie to brag about and you need to stuff your goddam face with dinner rolls. Plump the fuck up its hibernation and this is what friends are for. Get that support system in line.

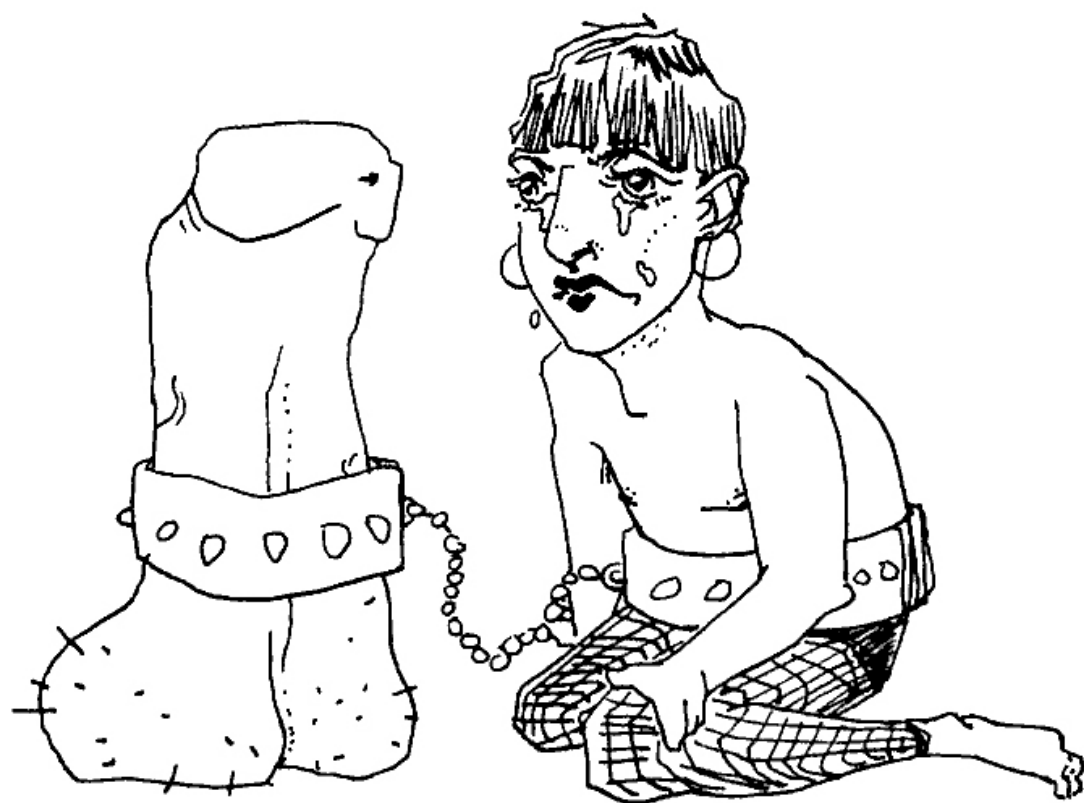




Ok so now you're thriving– you're fat, you're full, you're thick as hell from all those rolls.¹ But, the food coma is dying off and pleasantries of small talk and unsolicited advice are starting to whine like your cousins ugly duckling... excuse me their newborn. The trick to surviving family Christmas parties is good old fashioned alcoholism. All the adults already have it, so it's time you get a head start. Make sure you get that mingling cocktail, the palatable wine for dining, the after dinner Baileys (hide it in your decaf coffee of course), and then slip in some eggnog every time someone tries to talk about your future.²

The glorious high you've been riding is starting to wear off. There's a blur between your first cocktail at the Christmas party and the last present you opened on Christmas day, and now your emotions are ready to eat a greasy burger and throw it back up again. The trick to riding this isolation station is emotional ignorance. Watch anything and everything. You should have been curating a holiday playlist long before you got here, because you're going to be burning through series like they're Hallmark classics. This is serious business, because you will literally have no energy. I'm talking diversify your assets. Investing in YouTube, streaming services, that free trial of Hulu you've been putting off, at home DVDs, and all eight Harry Potters are going to give you options and keep you in blankets. No reason getting too cold wandering the streets at night, looking for the nearest buzz, fiending for any sense of thrill or entertainment.





The harsh reality that can't even escape the high of a Netflix original is that you've spent the last ten days alone in your basement with no hope. You're realizing the size of your blanket, that could easily fit two, is matching the size of the hole in your heart. You're not going to find any love by yourself, and if it's on the streets it's gonna be a frozen jar of hearts. If you're reading this in November, get laid now, get emotionally attached now, claw your way into the arms of a big buff teddy bear that is ready to spoon you beyond all of your heart's content. I don't care if you bench 250lbs, it's little spoon season and you gotta find someone to hold you. Fucking alone, that's how you'll be this winter.³ Prepare bitch.

Hahahahahahah this is the biggest joke of them all. You're probably really fucking sad because that social vitamin d is a scam and is starting to diminish.⁴ Don't worry, everyone's actually crying.⁵ When we lose the sun, connection, and a little bit of warmth, our emotions start to get sheltered. This place you'll be in is the fucking pits. Nothing else to say besides you're fucked and not like cuffing season fucked. That's why you better settle that petty shit with your therapist, talk to them, listen to them, and validate your emotions. Honestly, your therapist probably needs you more than you need them. Do it for them.



Alright so when the snow starts to say sayonara and your depression is melting off with the new warmth of the sun, you've made it through. Winter is going to be a dark, scary MF. But, if you're not a box of rocks you're gonna read this and hand your middle finger out as party favors to father christmas and jack frost. Appreciate your friends, try to be nice, enjoy your alone time, and get a cozy blanket you dumb bitch.

1. We actually do gain more weight in the winter, and it isn't because of one too many dinner rolls. Firstly, less sun in the winter means less digestion and more storage of fat. Sunlight and vitamin D is great for a healthy body, and a lack of in winter has biological implications. This is nothing to worry about, but it is important to know it also changes our behavior. Less sun and colder temperatures means our body also starts preparing for less resources. It's releasing new chemicals and doing more functions to keep you warm. It means we're likely to lean into a heavier eating style and more sedentary routine. Don't be too frightened, winter weight gain is actually pretty minimal on average, being about one pound only.

<https://www.cbc.ca/life/wellness/turns-out-winter-weight-gain-is-a-real-thing-1.4524314>
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4336296/>

2. Social anxiety is a really common reason to dread family gatherings. The best thing you can do is prepare a reason to leave a stressful conversation, seek the support of a close family member during the event, and do things that foster warm, mutual admiration and generosity like helping out with the dishes or hosting.

<https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2019/12/14/782933949/holiday-parties-make-you-squirm-heres-how-to-conquer-social-anxiety>

3. <https://www.verishop.com/c/sexual-wellness>

4. Seasonal affective disorder is a result of different biological mechanisms (much like the same ones earlier with behavioral weight changes), and also reduced levels of serotonin. Because of the changes in lifestyle accompanied with colder temperatures and less sun, our moods and emotions can change a lot.

<https://www.mhanational.org/conditions/seasonal-affective-disorder-sad>

5. Seasonal affective disorder is very real and very prevalent. It happens to a lot of people, so understand you are not alone in feeling this way. Around 10% of Americans experience it each year, and the severity can increase depending on different demographics and locations. Don't let anyone invalidate your feelings and emotions during this time, and understand that there are resources to help you improve your mood and feelings. A quick tip: even changing your light source to something more enjoyable is known to help :)

<https://wchh.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1002/pnp.173>

Please take care this winter, and consider these resources if it gets a little too chilly!