



ADVANCE
READING COPY
NOT FOR SALE

LEGENDARY ICONS

WHO REDEFINED BEAUTY
and HOW TO GLOW UP, TOO

INCLUDES

29

GUIDES

♦ AND ♦

How-Tos!

DAVID YI

Founder of **VERY GOOD LIGHT**

IN THIS INCLUSIVE, ILLUSTRATED HISTORY AND GUIDE to skincare and beauty, journalist and founder of *Very Good Light* David Yi teaches us that self-care, wellness, and feeling beautiful transcends time, boundaries, and binaries—and that pretty boys can change the world.

Brands from high to low are launching male and nonbinary beauty and wellness lines these days, but eons earlier, pharaohs in Egypt were already exfoliating, moisturizing, and masking. Thousands of years before Harry Styles strutted down the red carpet with a multicolored mani, the ancient Babylonians were rocking painted nails. And centuries before BTS became an international sensation known for their smoky eyes and poreless skin, the Korean Hwarang warriors were putting on a full face to head into battle.

Pretty Boys unearths diverse and unexpected beauty influencers from around the world and throughout the centuries, empowering readers to live and look their truths. Whether you're brand new to beauty, or already have a ten-step routine, the *Pretty Boys* within will inspire and help you find your best self through tutorials and tips from the biggest names in beauty today (everyone from Beyoncé's make-up artist Sir John to YouTuber Patrick Starr).

From Frank Ocean's daily routine to Rudolph Valentino's perfectly styled hair, Troye Sivan's subtle eyeliner to a face beat to the gods à la Bretman Rock, K-Beauty to clean beauty, *Pretty Boys* completely changes the way we see masculinity, gender expression, and identity. Being pretty is pretty powerful!

DAVID YI is the founder and editor of *Very Good Light*, a men's beauty publication. After beginning his career at publications like *People* and *Women's Wear Daily*, he went on to launch *Mashable's* first fashion and beauty verticals. A GLAAD and Webby nominee, his work has also been featured in the *Wall Street Journal*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Men's Health*, *Allure*, among others.

Publication date: June 1, 2021
Paper over Board
\$22.00 • 256 pages • 7 x 9
ISBN 978-0-358-41068-3

MARKETING & PUBLICITY

- Extensive online consumer advertising
- Targeted social media advertising
- Robust social media content including videos, tips, and photos
- Outreach to beauty and book influencers
- Outreach to Asian American communities

PUBLICITY CONTACT
Bridget Nocera
bridget.nocera@hnhco.com
212-598-5719



hnhbooks.com



Follow @seoulcialite
Follow us @HMHBooks

ADVANCE UNCORRECTED PROOF

This copy is supplied for review purposes only, and for limited distribution. As the work is still under review by the author and the publisher, there may be corrections, deletions, or other changes before publication. NOT FOR RESALE.

Copyright © 2021 by DAVID YI

All rights reserved

For information about permission to reproduce selections from this book, write to trade.permissions@hmhco.com or to Permissions, HOUGHTON MIFFLIN HARCOURT PUBLISHING COMPANY, 3 Park Ave, 19th Floor, New York, New York 10016.

HMHBOOKS.COM

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available
ISBN 9780358412670

Book design by RAPHAEL GERONI

Printed in China
SCP 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Pretty /

*BEAUTY HAS BEEN A CONSTANT
SYMBOL OF POWER. IT HAS
ALSO ALWAYS BEEN A CONDUIT
FOR CHANGE.*

Political

LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT THE MOST RENOWNED leaders and influencers in history—each of whom deliberately cultivated and used their outward aesthetics to amplify their sway over others. From Hatshepsut's beard to Louis XIV's wigs to the Black Panthers Afros, beauty has proven to be inherently political and political figures have used beauty—whether through makeup, hair, or facial ornamentation—to establish and demand new norms.

NEANDERTHAL

(5 0 , 0 0 0 B C E)

In the beginning, there was glitter.

EONS BEFORE KYLIE JENNER WAS LABELED A BILLIONAIRE beauty mogul (before getting stripped of the title), cavemen were grinding pyrite and mixing in different elements to daub onto their faces. Yep, the Neanderthal of 50,000 years ago invented foundation, color cosmetics, and glitter before modern humans—let alone Instagram—were even a *thing*. Which means we need to give a lot more credit to our long-ago, distant cousins. They weren't just simple-minded, low-browed creatures with inclinations to grunt and slam rocks together—they were actually highly emotionally intelligent beings who had the desire to enhance their aesthetics not only to showcase their beauty to others, but as a means of self-empowerment.

A 2010 mission led by archeologists from the University of Bristol in the UK analyzed pierced, hand-colored shells and mounds of pigment from two caves in Spain. At first, it seemed as if the findings were random mounds of colorful dirt and rocks. A scallop shell had remnants of orange, yellow, and red hues, which the team at first thought was evidence of paints that had been used for walls. But upon closer examination, the archeologists concluded that they were something extraordinary: the first known form of cosmetics. The yellow paints could have been used as foundation, while the red and orange powders may have been mixed to use as blush.

But the haul didn't stop there. The team discovered an amazing mixture of ground-up lepidocrocite (a lavender-colored rock), hematite (a strawberry-colored stone), pyrite (a rock with gold hues), and charcoal. Together, they created a stunning glitterlike substance. The effect, said lead professor João Zilhão, was a cleverly made cosmetic (similar to our present-day highlighters), both used over foundation. "Its preparation makes no sense unless it was used as a body cosmetic," Professor Zilhão told the *Guardian*. "When light should shine on you, you'd reflect." We now have a wide range of highlighters—from powder forms like FENTY Beauty's Killawatt Freestyle Highlighter to cream sticks like Glossier's Haloscope—but it's fascinating to imagine that tens of thousands of years ago, our distant relatives were also looking for that everywhere glow, whether on the forehead, cheekbones, clavicles, or, perhaps in their cases, to emphasize their striking brows.

Professor Zilhão also hypothesized a clear correlation between those who use makeup and cosmetics and emotionally and socially intelligent beings. To work to look your best and to flaunt your features—whether you choose to go with a natural, dewy face, or a full face of makeup—correlates with a greater capacity to think about one's social structures, whether to emphasize one's status or to blend in with the crowd. This trove of ancient highlighters, foundation, and blush provides a fascinating glimpse into the importance of makeup in our earliest communities. "Pretty" might very well be a natural extension of who we are at our core, so to our modern pretty boys: glow on!



HIGHLIGHT LIKE IT'S 50,000 BCE

Many millennia later, *Homo sapiens* still use highlighters, in the form of creams, powders, liquids, and more, to get a status-enhancing glimmer. “I think highlighters give off the sense of radiance, youthfulness and that fresh feeling,” says Anthony Nguyen, celebrity makeup artist to the likes of Adele, Jessie J, Christina Aguilera, and Katy Perry. But highlighter is not always about achieving a glow, nor is it simply about dewiness, Nguyen says. “It could just be a completely matte color that’s not shiny but used to bring out your features . . . You can still look radiant by playing with light and darkness in your face with a matte finish.”

In this highlighting tutorial, Nguyen breaks the process down, and shares the best tips to help you find your best light.

1. START WITH YOUR SKIN TYPE.

Not all skin is equal. Some have oily skin, while others have dry. Then there are people in the in-between with combination skin (see page 000 for more on skin types and How to Wash Your Face). Nguyen suggests powdery highlighter for oily skin, creamy for mature skin, liquid for dry skin, and a little mix of all three for combination skin. “There’s so many different formulas—it’s about figuring what’s best for you.”

2. THE SHADE OF IT ALL.

For highlighters, think brighter tones. After you’ve put on foundation and gotten your face painted in, add highlighters as a last step. “I think usually it has to be maybe three shades lighter or more,” Nguyen says, “but it’s just all about blending it in with the contours of your face and your main foundations, so it can’t just be super, super bright.” Nguyen suggests a champagne color for light to medium skin tones. For medium to deep skin, a peachy highlight or a deep bronze gives you a natural glow. Of course, not everyone is looking to have a subtle shine (this is highlighting, after all!)—the good news is that most highlighters are superpigmented, so pick the shade you prefer, and you will shine like the gods.

3. TOOLS OF THE TRADE.

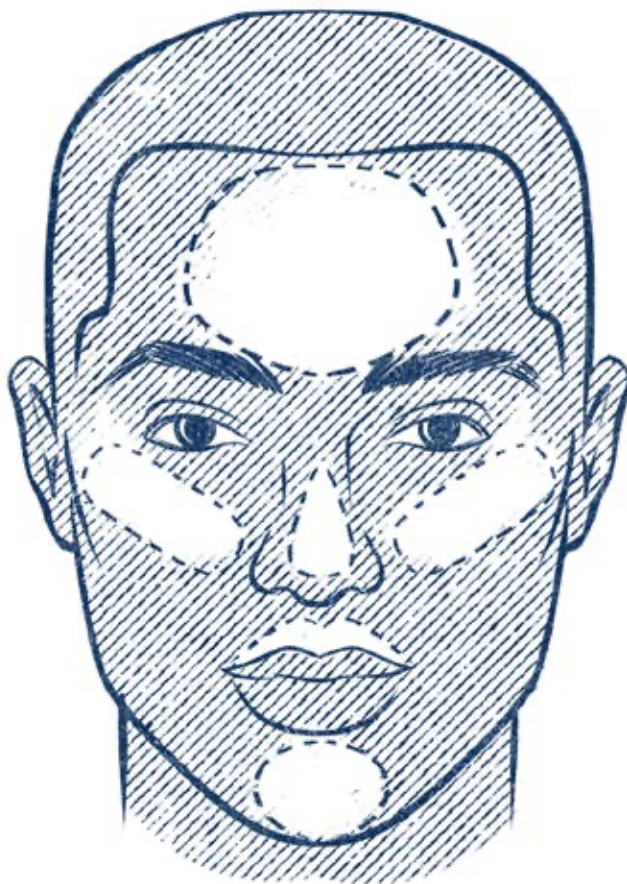
When it comes to highlighters, find the tools you need. Sometimes, all you need are your fingers. “When it comes to cream highlights, for instance, I personally love using my hands because your fingers can really help melt the product into the skin,” Nguyen says. “Or if I’m using highlights that are matte and cream, then I like to use a sponge such as a Beautyblender or just a regular square sponge. If it comes to using powder highlights, then I prefer using a fluffy dense brush, and when you have a brush that’s a bit more dense, it increases the intensity of the highlight, versus if it’s just a brush that’s a bit more sparse. It’s gonna give you a bit more of a natural highlight.”

4. MAP IT OUT.

Use your features to help imagine a grid to lay out where you want to highlight. The easiest way to see where your face is naturally highlighted is to put a light above your face and shine it downward, exposing the areas that are light and dark. Some may have more pronounced cheekbones than others. “It’s about finding the high planes of your face,” Nguyen says. Popular highlighting places: “Cheekbones, the bridge of the nose, above the brow bone, or right at the center of your eye where the tear duct is, top of the forehead, or the center of the chin.” As a bonus: ears! “I like to include the ear as well and the neck so that everything looks even.” Swipe on the tops of your ears and the sides of your neck—wherever the light hits.

5. YES, HIGHLIGHTERS CAN LOOK NATURAL.

For some, highlighting might seem too intense for a daily look. But to create highlights that are even more subtle than the above techniques, simply grab a foundation or concealer a few shades lighter than your own complexion and paint it onto the high planes of your face. Then pat loose powders in on top in a process called “baking” (aka locking in any product), and voilà—you’ve got a brighter yet still natural look that’ll draw the eyes of those around you.





RAMSES THE GREAT

(1 3 0 3 - 1 2 1 3 B C E)

A ruler's extensive and blessed morning regimen, explained.

IT'S ONLY DAWN AND ALREADY DOZENS OF ASSISTANTS ARE working furiously around the clock. In one corner is a wig station where stylists are gliding brushes through silky strands of hair. In another, manicurists have set up basins full of fragrant water mixed with drops of exotic oils. Makeup artists line tables with beautiful eyeshadow pigments in scintillating emerald, gold, and black, making room for the aestheticians to organize rich creams, moisturizers, and exfoliators, all sourced from the most expensive ingredients.

If you're thinking this is the setup for a royal wedding, or perhaps a *Vogue* cover shoot for Beyoncé, you probably wouldn't be wrong. But this would actually be just another morning for an Egyptian ruler like Ramses II—better known as Ramses the Great—who was accustomed to being primped and pampered for hours on end before his day even began. And this wasn't for #selfcare reasons alone—for the ancient Egyptians, the better you smelled, the more attractive you looked, and the glowier your complexion, the more favorable you'd be in the eyes of the gods.

The ancient Egyptians lived by a strict set of hygiene rules that were codified in religious texts like the *Book of the Dead*. According to it, one couldn't even open their mouth to speak in the day unless they were “clean, dressed in fresh clothes, shod in white sandals, painted

with eye-paint, anointed with the finest oil of myrrh.” Any pressing matter, from defense strategies for protecting the kingdom from neighboring rivals like the Hittites to architectural decisions, would have to wait until one looked—and smelled—one’s best. And so, every morning before sunrise, Ramses the Great would open his eyelids to find dozens of officials, servants, assistants, and slaves waiting to guide him through his elaborate beauty routine—a collective of people and products that may be the original beauty industry.

Led by a person literally named the “Chief of the Scented Oils and Pastes for Rubbing His Majesty’s Body,” one of the most important people in Ramses’s palace, the staff would start by dunking his body into a warm bath, sometimes filled with milk. The team would scrub every square inch using soaps made with animal and vegetable oils mixed alkaline salts found in the Dead Sea, a natural antibacterial. While he soaked in the water, they’d mix milk and honey to create face masks, slathering them across the pharaoh’s bronzed face for a thorough exfoliating and moisturizing treatment. If they had time, they’d remove hair from his body through a process called sugaring, in which the hair is removed with a mixture of sugar and honey. Before he was dressed, he would be doused in a potpourri of perfumes.

One of the best known and favorite perfumes of royals was kyphi, a rare and luxurious fragrance composed of mastic, pine resin, cinnamon, frankincense, myrrh, mint, and other aromatics. The scent was sweet, spicy, and long-lasting. Kyphi was so expensive, it’s said that it was used sparingly for mortals, relegated mostly to temples where it would be burned for the gods.

Afterward, manicurists would be summoned to trim his finger- and toenails with a small file and knife. The position was of such importance and high esteem that many manicurists would later include their job title front and center on their tombs. To touch the hands of a pharaoh, whom they viewed as godly, was the greatest of honors. So was clipping his toenails.

With Egypt’s scorching climate (with heat going up to 122°F), it was essential that creams, moisturizers, and masks were layered on the pharaoh’s face multiple times throughout the day to keep his skin supple.

One such recipe was an antiaging cream made of honey, lotus flowers, and plant oils, including papyrus. The cream was also a multitasker: effective at fading scars, acting as a sunscreen, and a natural insect repellent.

After Pharaoh’s face was softened and radiant, makeup artists would be summoned to line his eyes with kohl. Eyeliner was the most important step, according to Egyptologist Helen Strudwick, who notes that in ancient Egyptian culture, the eyes held great power. To accentuate the eyes, they were outlined with green or black paint, elongating their shape and size. Sporting the sparkliest, highest-quality eyeliner signified royalty and power—the ingredients in eyeliner were accessible only to the higher classes.

Ancient eyeliner was composed of pigments in green malachite and black kohl, made from grinding galena, a natural form of lead, with oil or fat, which created a creamy substance that would allow the product to last all day. Sometimes other luxurious ingredients were added for a glossy effect, such as ground pearls, rubies, emeralds, silver, gold, and coral, in addition to medicinal herbs like neem, saffron, and fennel. The liner would be painted on by hand or with a brush or small stick in a daily process, satisfying both aesthetic desires and religious obligations.

But as extravagant as eyeliner was, it also symbolized that the wearer had the protection of the gods Horus and Ra, who would ward off illness and evil”. And wearing kohl eyeliner had its practical purposes as well. Before the advent of Ray-Bans, Egyptians found that rimming their eyes with a coat of eyeliner reduced the sun’s glare, trapped dust and dirt and kept it from entering the eye, acted as an antibacterial agent, repelled insects, and provided cooling relief.

As the final step before Ramses II headed out the door, his stylists picked out the perfect wig to plop onto his shaven head. Wig selection was important in accordance to the tasks ahead in the day, and Ramses, like all pharaohs, had multiples ready for specific events like family gatherings, festivals, or war. Different wigs—commonly made of human hair, though horsehair wigs would later be introduced as a fashion trend—were adorned with gems, braided with jewelry, and cut to specific lengths. Wigs also prevented lice as they were worn over bald scalps, making it easier to maintain hygiene, and provided respite from heat. The ancient Egyptians even had beard wigs—gold plated, knotted, and worn hooked behind the ears—which were used more for religious ceremonies.

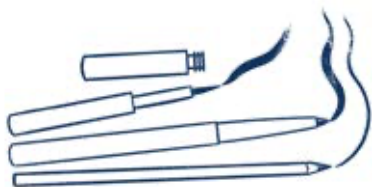
With his morning rituals complete, his skin moist and face dewy, Ramses was *finally* ready for his duties. He would begin the early afternoon with a first stop at the many temples where he’d pay homage to the gods and pray for their favor. Once he’d paid his respects, he’d head off to accomplish history-making feats: signing the first recorded peace treaty; expanding Egypt’s territories and influence; commissioning some of the most breathtaking architecture in all of world history; and fathering two hundred children. Whew, he was booked and busy, but never too occupied for a facial. Ramses II’s beauty rituals must have made him radiant indeed, to have received *all* those favors during his sixty-seven-year reign. There were eleven rulers named Ramses in Egyptian history, but only one was godly enough to bear the title “the Great.”

RULE OVER YOUR EYELINER LIKE RAMSES THE GREAT

If eyes are the windows to the soul, then eyeliner is the fuel that sets the house on fire.

Okay, not literally—we don't want anyone setting themselves on fire at the expense of this metaphor. But it's undeniable that eyeliner brings heat to any wearer's overall look. Since ancient Egypt, kohl has been used to outline the eyes, often smudged for a bold, smoldering effect. Fast-forward to the modern day, and kohl is no longer as popular as it once was, replaced instead by pencils and liquid eyeliners. But the intention remains the same!

Just ask celebrity makeup artist Jessica Ortiz, whose clients include actors Rami Malek and Darren Criss. Both are no strangers to eyeliner: the former used it throughout filming *Bohemian Rhapsody*, while the latter wore electric-blue eyeliner as part of his dazzling 2019 Met Gala look. Here eyeliner expert Ortiz walks you through everything you need to know to line your eyes like an Egyptian god (or Rami Malek, for that matter!).



1. KNOW THY TOOLS.

Are you a pencil, gel, or liquid type of person? Identifying which tool works best for you is the first step toward lining your eyes. "Kohl pencils are easiest for beginners and can be smoked out to give a more grunge look, one that doesn't have to be so perfect," says Jessica. "Gels glide on easily and are a great next step once you have mastered the pencil." But they're not for the faint of hand: "They set quickly, so work fast!" As for liquid? That's for when you've mastered the first two: "Liquid eyeliners are more permanent and precise, and give you those perfect, deep, dark lines," says Jessica.



2. PRACTICE THE MOTION.

Whichever tool you end up using, applying it isn't going to feel natural at first. And everyone's different: "Some people's eyes immediately water, while others want to immediately clamp their eyes shut," Jessica says. "It's a natural reaction, so don't worry." When it comes to definition, you'll usually want to fill in the waterline—the flesh-toned area under and above the lids—as well as you can with a waterproof pencil. The waterline can be super sensitive, so Jessica suggests slowly allowing your eye's reflexes to get used to the feeling. "The more you try it, the less it'll feel weird."



3. DOT IT AND DASH IT.

To line the actual eyelids, "Start by using a light touch, feathering the pencil at a slight angle gently. You'll soon be able to do a line in one swoop in no time," she says. For liquid eyeliner, use dots on your upper lid and then connect them with a line. If it doesn't look symmetrical or if you've messed up, don't sweat. Simply dip a Q-tip in micellar water and use it as an eraser. And if you're still not getting the lines perfect the first few times, don't fret. As Jessica says, "Not having perfect eyeliner on the first try happens to the best of us—it's all about doing it again and again until it's just right."

HATSHEPSUT

(1 4 7 9 - 1 4 5 8 B C E)

A ruler, their dual image, beard, and erasure.

IT LOOKED LIKE A BRUTAL MURDER SCENE: EYES GOUGED, BODIES decapitated, names scratched out.

The year is 1927, and in front of Egyptologist Herbert Eustis Winlock, then head of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, lay shards of broken granite and limestone. They're remnants within the tomb of a pharaoh named Hatshepsut. From the rubble, it's hard to imagine these broken pieces as whole, grand, proud statues.

As Winlock is excavating, he's unnerved. He and his team are aware of what this type of violation means, especially in ancient times. Egyptians viewed their pharaohs as gods. For anyone to have defamed the depiction of a royal—whether a painting or a statue—wasn't only malicious, but sacrilegious. Ancient Egyptians believed that the spirit would first travel through the underworld and be subjected to various tests and assessments of worthiness before finally reaching the afterlife. This, of course, only if their earthly effigies remained intact.

Who could have despised the pharaoh so much as to have attempted to erase their image from history—and with it, their spirit from thriving in the afterlife? Soon, Winlock would unlock the secrets in front of him. He just had to piece the mystery together first.

.....

ALL HATSHEPSUT WANTED WAS A BEARD.

Beards signified royalty and power. Beards were signs of godliness.

But beards were only for men.

While her father ruled over Egypt, she observed him closely, taking notes on how he carried himself, his many decisions, his diplomacy, the respect he commanded. While she desired nothing more than to follow in his footsteps, her mother would tell her that the throne was no place for a girl.

The only child of Thutmose I and his chief wife, Ahmose, Hatshepsut was expected to be like her mother: beautiful, submissive, possessing all the virtues of a prudent wife. To young Hatshepsut, this was infuriating. A woman couldn't ask for the moon, but a man could have the universe.



Hatshepsut was married to her younger half-brother, Thutmose II, and after the death of their father, he became pharaoh. But Hatshepsut, though she was queen, soon found herself eclipsed by his secondary wife, Iset, and, even worse, by Iset's newly birthed son, Thutmose III. While they were promoted to becoming the new royal family, Hatshepsut, with her daughter Neferure (meaning "Beauty of Ra"), were moved to a lesser chamber. As Iset celebrated her new future as queen of the empire, Hatshepsut burned with envy, not of Iset, but of the infant prince.

When Thutmose II died a few years later, the empire mourned. Egypt desperately needed a stable ruler after two deaths in such close succession. But

Thutmose III was a mere toddler. Regardless, bathed in myrrh, cloaked in royal blue, dripping with gold, the successor, wrapped in Iset's arms, was walked toward the throne for his anointment by the gods. But the throne was occupied.

In front of them was none other than Hatshepsut, sporting the sacred khepresh—the royal headdress with a golden cobra hooked to its front, its eyes glinting ruby red—along with a masculine leather kilt tied to her waist. Around her chin she had wrapped a false beard, braided from goat's hair, long and skinny to resemble that of Osiris, god of the afterlife. It was the ultimate sign of authority.

Egyptians were meticulous groomers and would shave their bodies from head to toe. A wig would cover a pharaoh's cranium. Pharaohs were living, breathing, earthly representations of their gods and they'd go to every length to resemble them. Beard wigs were sacred and symbolized ultimate authority. They came in two distinctive styles: The first was made of goat hair, either woven in a horizontal pattern or tightly braided to a long, thin point. These were strapped around the neck and pasted onto the chin to keep them in place. Sometimes the beards were held in place with cords that could be tied behind the head, then hidden with a wig. The second type was made of pure bronze or gold, with braided detailing. It would be tied to the khepresh so that it dangled from the royal headpiece.

Up until that point, Hatshepsut had been depicted as female in the portrayals of her winding curves, the softness in her posture, in art. But now, wearing the false beard perhaps validated how Hatshepsut had felt all along: not fully woman, not entirely man, instead somewhere in between.

In the following years, descriptions of the pharaoh ranged from using “she/her” pronouns—“She Is First Among Noble Women,” “Daughter of Re” (a feminine word ending)—to neutral—“His Majesty, Himself”—to simply “His Majesty.” As such, from here on out, we will use they/them pronouns for the ruler. Monuments were erected that showcased the new pharaoh with chiseled muscles and a masculine posture. Hatshepsut’s face was sculpted into a sphinx, a hybrid creature that the Egyptians viewed as male. Hatshepsut was a commanding pharaoh, commissioning a profusion of art and architecture, reopening trade routes with foreign countries, strengthening the royal army, and expanding the kingdom.

Yet Thutmose III would be waiting in the wings, as Hatshepsut once had. As a young adult, Thutmose III felt he deserved his rightful authority. But as he asked to be recognized, the royal courts denied his request to be the sole ruler, when they already had such a mighty pharaoh. To appease the petulant young man, Hatshepsut gave him distractions—lofty roles like leading the Egyptian army, and foreign missions far and wide.

As time passed and Hatshepsut became aware that their time as ruler was ending, it became imperative that they be remembered and memorialized alongside past pharaohs. For years before their death, Hatshepsut oversaw the building of a new burial structure alongside their father’s. This would all but guarantee that their legacy and history would never be questioned, they thought.

When Hatshepsut died, all their people came to their tomb to pay their respects. But Thutmose III refused to attend. On the day of their long-awaited coronation, in a monsoon of rage, Thutmose III ordered that all monuments, portrayals, and paintings of Hatshepsut be vandalized. Strike out their name, remove their eyes, he directed. “Ensure that no one will ever remember Hatshepsut ever again!”

AND SO THE SINGULAR HATSHEPSUT WAS FORGOTTEN.

Until, standing amid the dust and rubble, Winlock came upon a single surviving inscription on one of Hatshepsut's obelisks. It was as if the late pharaoh spoke to him from the afterlife: "Now my heart turns this way and that, as I think what the people will say—those who shall see my monuments in years to come, and who shall speak of what I have done."

Taking the severed pieces, he and his team carefully pieced them back together, so that once again, we have proof of this genderfluid ruler and their accomplishments, never to be erased from history again.

CYRUS THE GREAT

(6 0 0 - 5 3 0 B C E)

The Beauty King.

IT'S BEEN A DEVASTATING WEEK.

Your country has been defeated by your greatest enemy, the Persian Empire, whose king, you've heard, is as ruthless as he is dangerous. You recall your own father once warning you about this man, whom people call "Cyrus the Great." As one of the last surviving members of the court, you expect to go the same way, but you promise yourself to die with honor.

A voice interrupts your thoughts.

"Stand attention!" the Persian guard yells, his voice bellowing into the crowd. "Bow down to your new king."

In the distance, you make out a tall, regal figure on the horizon. You wipe your eyes to get a better glimpse of the mirage, draped in a fine, colorful fringed robe, his arms bedecked with golden bracelets that scintillate in the daylight.

You've heard so much about him, the founder of the Achaemenid Empire, the most powerful in the world. Under his leadership, his armies have conquered nations ranging from Western and Central Asia to the lands surrounding the Mediterranean Sea to the Indus River, where you're from. He has created the Persian Empire.

As you study the great leader in front of you, you're bewildered. This man isn't the brutish goliath you'd been taught to imagine.

His olive skin glows under the sun's rays. Moisture drips from his brow. His glossy lids smolder with dark kohl that resembles smoke, rising from the outer corners of his squinting eyes—he glances at you, and you feel flushed, as if wine has touched your lips. You can't help but stare at his grand hooked nose and his thick, curly facial hair, perfectly moisturized with what

you're sure is expensive oil. His chiseled cheeks are dabbed with a deep rouge balm, blended into sun-kissed radiance. As he walks past you, a strong, decadent scent wafts into your nostrils, intoxicating your senses. You identify the fragrance: a potpourri of musk, myrrh, saffron, camphor, and other sweet-smelling plants.

King Cyrus is extraordinary—a true stunner.

In the upcoming weeks, King Cyrus invites you to join his royal counsel. You know your people best, he says. It'd be an asset for you to continue governing them. And so you wake up earlier than the sun to be taken to a salon. This is your initiation into the Persian Empire.

The salon has shelves full of colored glass jars in every hue. You're assigned your own personal makeup artist who awaits you, bottles of cosmetics

in hand, a lush towel hanging over their arm. You melt into your seat and shut your eyes as the makeup artist takes kohl and pencils in your eyelids, blending them out onto your lids. Kohl, you're told, is important, as it makes your eyes "more lustrous than they are." Rouge is blended onto your cheeks to give you a flush of color.

As you'll learn, King Cyrus expects excellence from his employees, in all aspects. Beauty is no exception. The purpose of glamour is "to excel his subjects but also cast a sort of spell on them." You're to be better than those you serve so that they can look to you for hope—to be beautiful, to inspire admiration and awe, is a duty.

The dress code is Median, a traditional Persian costume of cotton, draped over you from head to toe. While elegant, it also has a practical purpose: it's flattering, concealing any physical insecurities you may have, while lending the illusion that you're taller than you really are. You're told you can even use insoles in your shoes to elevate your stature further, if need be.



Your hair is plied with henna for shine, and dyed jet black with a dark mixture of indigo, oak apple, and walnut. Afterward, your hair is curled, softened with oils, and soaked in perfume so your locks “look better than nature made it.”

As the makeup artist will explain, hair signifies a person’s state of health. It reflects the strength, virility, and overall condition of one’s body. You get a flashback to when you first beheld the king, and you can’t argue that first impressions are indeed important.

An hour passes, and your look is complete. You glance at your reflection, and your mouth gapes open—you can’t believe the glamorous person standing before you. A beautician will tell you this later, but you begin walking with a heavier step, your head held up higher, your chest puffed out with pride. As you walk into the king’s chambers, he scrutinizes your new look, smiles, and nods. You’re ready.

There are decades of prosperity under the Persian Empire. So much so that you now identify as Persian—much to even your own surprise.

When King Cyrus eventually dies, defeated in battle, you, along with millions of others, mourn with grief. “He honored his subjects and cared for them as if they were his own children and they, on their part, revered Cyrus as a father,” the Greek author Xenophon will write later in a series-length biography of your king. You’re relieved that his story will be memorialized. He did, after all, change your life for the better.

As one historian noted, “A man did not become king because he was handsome, it was because of his position as king that he was automatically designated as handsome.” According to multiple sources, however, including the Cyrus Cylinder, a set of cylindrical clay tablets that retell his conquests, Cyrus the Great looked and acted the part of a perfect king. Various accounts, from the Greek Cyropaedia by Xenophon to the Old Testament, write fondly about his beauty, and recount how he was the first conqueror on record to support human rights. Though it feels strange now to see this type of adoration for a conqueror, Cyrus the Great would inspire generations to come, including the likes of Alexander the Great and Thomas Jefferson, both of whom perceived the Persian king as a superb example of leadership.

HOW TO WASH YOUR FACE

According to Lady Gaga's facialist, yes, there is a right way.

Turns out there is a right way to wash your mean mug. According to Joomee Song, a Korean Japanese skincare expert based in New York City, the secret to the entertainer's glow-worthy skin starts with skincare's first step: cleansing. While the skincare whisperer has used high-tech treatments to pamper Hollywood elites and their pores, she still says that it all starts with the basics: washing your face.

"Cleansing is one of the most important steps in skincare," she says. It's also the step that's the most misunderstood. The wrong cleanser can strip your skin of its natural oils or cause you to have even more breakouts. Worse, it could damage your skin. Here Joomee walks us through how to properly wash your face, from which products to use to how to pat dry with a towel.

1. START BY IDENTIFYING YOUR SKIN TYPE.

"The proper way to cleanse your skin starts with your understanding of the amount of oil production in your skin," Joomee says—aka how much dirt and impurities you can remove without causing dryness and/or dehydration. Most people's skin falls into one of the following categories: sensitive, dry, combination, or oily.

Sensitive or Dry—If you have sensitive skin, you'll find that your complexion turns red with a single touch, or usually after using a new product. "It means your skin lacks natural healthy oils," Joomee explains. If you're dry, you'll notice your face is tight after cleansing, or you'll see flakes on the skin. **Your cleanser type:** Hydrating oil or super-gentle milky cleansers. "These will add more oil into your skin while you cleanse," says Joomee. Instead of rinsing with water, she suggests removing the cleanser with a warm compress. "This will help keep you from stripping your own natural oils, especially if you have sensitive skin." Natural oils also give your skin an extra coating to prevent water loss.

Combination—Possibly the most complicated of skin types, this means you're oily in some areas, dry in others, and maybe sensitive in a few specific spots. Because this skin type isn't a one-cleanser-fits-all situation, Joomee suggests testing a few cleansers to see which work for you before deciding which to keep in your beauty rotation. **Your cleanser types:** Milky, gel, foam. "These are ideal for combination skin as it allows your skin to have enough oil to spare," she says. Again, the key here is experimenting to see how effective a cleanser you can use without causing your pores to get dehydrated. Milky cleansers as the gentlest, gels are a little stronger, and foam are the strongest, so use them only if your skin seems to need something stronger.



Oily—The best way to tell if you have oily skin? "Your face is covered with oil in less than one hour after cleansing," says Joomee. Still, you don't want to use anything too harsh that will overstrip your natural oils. When it comes to cleansing, the best rule of thumb is to maintain your natural hydration and oils. **Your cleanser types:** Oil and gel. Use an oil cleanser first—oil traps oil, after all—and then go with a gel cleanser for a double cleanse. This one-two combination will extract impurities while also getting rid of excess oil.

2. NOW THAT YOU'VE IDENTIFIED YOUR PERFECT CLEANSER, IT'S TIME TO WASH YOUR FACE.

With warm water, splash your face to open your pores. Next, take a dime-size amount of cleanser—a little goes a long way—and use a circular motion to spread it onto your face. While there isn't a perfect method, Joomee does say that it's possible to be too harsh with your face. "Don't incorporate too much friction, which can cause irritation and inflammation," she says. "Be gentle."

After rinsing, pat your face dry instead of scrubbing your face with a towel. Being too heavy-handed can open up your pores or, worse, cause scratches. Your skin should feel balanced after cleansing, meaning if you used the right cleanser, it shouldn't feel stiff or dry, and you shouldn't feel any burning sensation. Immediately after, follow up with a toner, serum, and face cream (for more on next steps, see page 000 to read about the Korean 10-step routine).

