

LIPSTICKS & MARTINIS

ISSUE 03

The ₹₹₹ Receipt: What
"Effortless" Actually Costs

Worth Every Wear: The
L&M Splurge List

Can a Lipstick Change
Your Life? A Very Serious
Investigation

PLUS: Cosmic Refunds,
Maintenance Bingo & The
L&M Café



THE PUT-TOGETHER GIRL TAX

Saturday, 22 August 2026





Editor's

Note

Lipsticks & Martinis

Issue 03 - The Put-together Girl Tax

From one woman learning what it takes to feel put together to another, this issue looks behind the word effortless.

The Put-Together Girl Tax is not about buying less or giving up beauty. It is about noticing what our rituals return, and what we maintain for an invisible audience. Keep the lipstick, the matching set and everything that makes life more delightful. Question only the pressure to remain perfectly composed while enjoying them.

We love the lipstick. We're simply examining the receipt.

*Deepanshi
Srivastava*

Founder & Editor-in-Chief



In this issue

We count the products behind the clean-girl look, examine the art of maintenance and ask whether lipstick can actually change a life. Inside: fantasy selves, worthwhile splurges, tiny systems, cosmic refunds and one very disputed emotional invoice.

Consider this your permission to keep what feels like you, and return the rest.

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The lipstick stays. The pressure is returnable.

The Put-together girl tax

/ðə put tə'geðə ɡɜ:l tæks/ •
noun • modern womanhood

The accumulated money, time, energy and emotional labour women spend trying to appear polished, capable and effortlessly in control. It includes the visible expenses: skincare, makeup, hair appointments, clothes, fitness memberships, coffees and emergency cabs, as well as the costs nobody adds to the receipt: planning every detail, monitoring how you look, remaining pleasant under pressure and pretending that maintaining it all comes naturally.

The Put-Together Girl Tax is rarely paid in one dramatic transaction. It disappears through ₹799 serums, quick salon appointments, “investment” basics, saved shopping carts, five extra minutes spent fixing your hair and the exhausting belief that everybody else has somehow mastered womanhood more convincingly than you.

It is not the price of enjoying beauty. It is the price of believing beauty, composure and constant self-improvement are the minimum requirements for being taken seriously.

*At L&M, we love the lipstick.
We are simply examining the receipt.*



Nobody told us how much maintenance “natural” requires.

Before it looks effortless, it takes effort, experimentation and at least one outfit you’d like erased from photographic evidence.

The myth of the effortless woman is not that she puts in no effort. It is that she has repeated certain choices so many times that they have become second nature. She knows which clothes feel like her, which rituals help her return to herself and which version of “put together” she is actually interested in becoming. What once required thought, experimentation and the occasional identity crisis now looks natural. That is what we eventually call *effortless*. Even our iconic women were

“

Effortlessness is not perfection without interruption. It is knowing who you are well enough that an interruption does not permanently take her away.

”

never perfectly composed all the time. Blair Waldorf questioned her worth beneath the headbands and immaculate tailoring; Carrie Bradshaw contemplated every speck of her existence, usually through a column. They were never compelling because they remained camera-perfect through every episode. They became iconic because they unravelled, reconsidered who they were and still found their way back to themselves.



Before she became *that woman*

Most women who appear deeply put together have experienced days when everything bothered them so much that they wanted to throw up. Days that were messy, lonely and painfully still. Days with no sunlight, no exciting plan and nothing obvious to look forward to. Days when they could not distract themselves with another person's company or perception and were forced into the uncomfortable quiet of their own minds.



Who are you when everybody disappears? What do you like when nobody is there to approve of it? What do you reach for when it will never appear in a photograph? What would you continue doing if nobody could compliment you for it?

Solitude has a slightly inconvenient way of removing the

audience. Once it does, you begin noticing which parts of your life were chosen by you and which were performed for everybody else. That is where the actual journey towards becoming put together begins. Not inside a shopping cart, but in the private process of listening closely enough to recognise your own voice.

the art of maintenance

A celebration of ritual, care and everything that helps a woman feel like herself.

Maintenance is not about believing you are a problem waiting to be fixed. It is the quiet art of noticing what makes you feel cared for, and returning to it often enough that care becomes second nature.

A good routine is rarely discovered fully formed. It is curated through experimentation: the serum that finally works, the haircut that feels unmistakably yours, the fragrance that changes your posture and the lipstick you reach for without thinking.

The products decorating our shelves are not merely steps on a checklist. They hold memories, moods and tiny transformations. Used with pleasure, maintenance becomes a creative language, one through which a woman chooses how she wants to meet herself and the world.

*carefully curated,
completely hers*





High Maintenance, Low Maintenance or Secretly Exhausted?

Your routine has been trying to tell you something. Tick the answer that resembles your actual life, not the woman you think you should be.

1 Plans move two hours earlier. You...

- ☐ A. Rearrange the schedule. The ritual stays.
- ☐ B. Hair up, reliable outfit, lip product, gone.
- ☐ C. Calculate every step, panic and still begin late.

2 Your bathroom shelf is...

- ☐ A. A beautifully curated laboratory.
- ☐ B. Three products doing several jobs.
- ☐ C. Full of things I am too tired to use consistently.

3 “Put together” means...

- ☐ A. Every detail feels considered.
- ☐ B. Comfortable, clean and recognisably me.
- ☐ C. Nobody can tell how close I am to cancelling.

4 You discover a new beauty trend. You...

- ☐ A. Research it and make it my own.
- ☐ B. Admire it; my routine is doing fine.
- ☐ C. Save it with seventeen routines I'll begin Monday.

5 Your everyday bag contains...

- ☐ A. Perfume, powder, clips, cream and three lip options.
- ☐ B. Phone, wallet, keys—usually.
- ☐ C. Everything except the thing I currently need.

6 An important event is tomorrow. Tonight, you're...

- ☐ A. Planning the outfit and enjoying the preparation.
- ☐ B. Checking that the outfit is clean and trusting tomorrow-me.
- ☐ C. Trying on everything while questioning my existence.



High Maintenance, Low Maintenance or Secretly Exhausted?

Your routine has been trying to tell you something. Tick the answer that resembles your actual life, not the woman you think you should be.

7 When a ritual stops being enjoyable, you...

- ☐ A. Adapt it until the pleasure returns.
- ☐ B. Stop doing it. Life continues.
- ☐ C. Keep doing it badly and feel guilty.

8 Your ideal Sunday reset is...

- ☐ A. Everything shower, fresh nails and tomorrow prepared.
- ☐ B. Clean clothes, clean sheets and enough sleep.
- ☐ C. An ambitious checklist followed by scrolling and regret.

9 Your relationship with maintenance is...

- ☐ A. Creative time I genuinely enjoy.
- ☐ B. Useful, but not my entire personality.
- ☐ C. It gives me control, until the control exhausts me.

CALCULATE YOUR SCORE

Give yourself:

A = 2 points, B = 1 point, C = 3 points

Add the points from all nine questions. Your total will fall between 9 and 27.

9–14 POINTS: Low Maintenance

The Effortless Essentialist

Your routine is edited, reliable and built around what works. Occasionally, let yourself choose something simply because it is fun.

Motto: If it works, it stays.

15–21 POINTS: High Maintenance

The Ritual Romantic

You enjoy the preparation as much as the finished result. Keep the pleasure but remember that skipping a step changes nothing about your worth.

Motto: The effort is part of the pleasure.

22–27 POINTS: Secretly Exhausted

The Maintenance Manager

Your routine has begun feeling like unpaid administration. Keep what returns energy and make everything else optional.

Motto: Care should support me, not supervise me.

The Tiny Systems Behind “Effortless”



THE SIGNATURE FORMULA

One reliable combination of hair, makeup and accessories for days when creativity has called in sick.



THE OUTFIT ARCHIVE

Photograph combinations that worked. On uninspired mornings, consult the evidence instead of rebuilding personal style from scratch.



THE RESTOCK NOTE

Keep one running list of finished and nearly finished products. Your empty cleanser should never become breaking news.



THE MAINTENANCE CALENDAR

Schedule appointments, wash days and longer rituals before they turn into last-minute rescue operations.

THE READY-TO-GO POUCH

Keep everyday essentials together. Move one pouch between bags instead of conducting a daily archaeological transfer.



The Maintenance *Menu*



The Glow Course

1

On the menu:

A reliable cleanser • Hydrating layers • Daily sunscreen • One treatment that understands the assignment

Serves:

Comfort, consistency and skin you enjoy living in.



2

The Everything Shower

On the menu:

Body polish • Lotion or oil • Fresh nails • A fragrance chosen according to the plot

Serves:

Softness, sensory pleasure and the feeling that a new chapter may begin immediately.



3

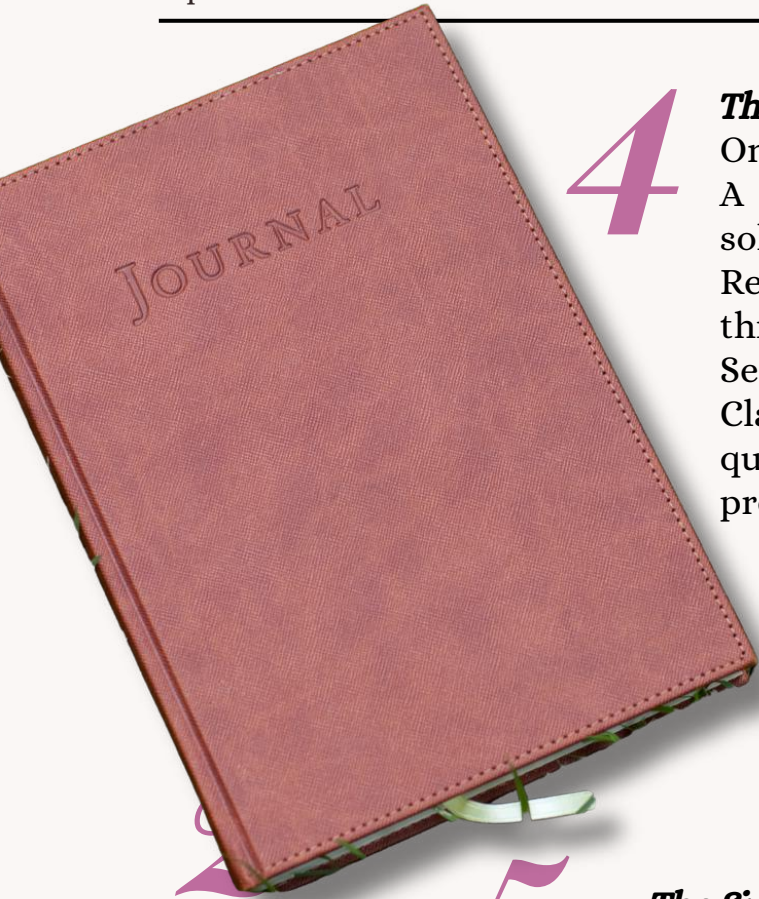
The Crown Course

On the menu:

Wash-day patience • A nourishing mask • Heat protection • The styling product responsible for your “natural” hair

Serves:

Fresh energy and an excellent reason to dramatically flip your hair.



The Quiet Course

On the menu:

A journal page • A little
solitude • Emotional honesty •
Rest that has not been earned
through exhaustion

Serves:

Clarity, and enough internal quiet to hear your own preferences again.



The Signature Course

On the menu:

Clothes that fit properly • Thoughtful tailoring • Reliable accessories • An outfit prepared before the panic begins

Serves:

Self-expression without
requiring an introduction.



The Reset Course

On the menu:

Restocked essentials • A tidy corner • Appointments remembered • Tomorrow acknowledged in advance

Serves:

The invisible structure behind
a woman who appears
mysteriously prepared.



How many products does it take to become a “clean girl”?

And That Was Only the Makeup

The clean-girl face may require twelve products, but the aesthetic begins long before the first drop of skin tint. Glowing skin, slicked-back hair, glossy lips and perfectly unremarkable nails all arrive with their own supporting cast.

Makeup: 12 products

Invisible preparation: 29 products and tools

Total: 41 tiny contributors

Final description: “She barely did anything.”

The Skincare Prologue

The visible result: Fresh, hydrated skin that appears to need no makeup.

Behind the glow:

Cleanser • Toner • Serum • Moisturiser •
Sunscreen • Lip balm

Six products have entered the group chat before makeup has even been invited.

The Brow Clause

The visible result: Naturally full brows, casually brushed upwards.

Behind the arch:

Brow pencil • Precision brush • Clear or tinted brow gel

They are “untouched”—apart from the shaping, filling, brushing and gel with the structural integrity of cement.

*Minimalism is
sometimes
maximalism in
excellent lighting.*

None of this makes the clean-girl aesthetic dishonest. Beauty has always involved creativity, care and construction.

The problem begins only when carefully assembled effort is presented as the natural standard every woman should wake up meeting.



The Bare-Lip Illusion

The visible result: Soft, healthy lips with “just a little balm.”

Behind the glow:

Lip scrub • Lip mask • Nude liner •
Tinted balm or gloss

“My lips but better” occasionally
requires an entire product development
team.

Every beautiful look is built from carefully curated products, the little bottles, brushes and compacts that decorate our shelves and make getting ready feel like an occasion. There is nothing wrong with enjoying the process. Beauty is creative, personal and, when we let it be, incredibly fun.

But when a picture-perfect face appears online, remember that we are usually seeing the final result without the ingredient list. There may be twelve products, years—

—of experimentation and some exceptionally cooperative lighting behind it.

So, instead of letting someone else’s finished look make you question your own, access the full picture. Discover what created it, choose the parts that genuinely excite you and personalise your shelf accordingly.

Try the aesthetic. Keep what makes you feel good. Skip what makes simplicity feel like a second job.



The Barely-There Manicure

The visible result: Short, clean nails in a shade so subtle it is practically classified information.

Behind the hands:

Cuticle oil • Nail file • Base coat • Sheer
polish • Top coat • Hand cream

Nothing announces low maintenance
quite like six products dedicated to
looking as though nothing was done.



Who Are You Shopping For?

Sometimes, we are not merely buying the blazer, the perfume or the satin pyjamas. We are trying on the woman we imagine wearing them, and briefly borrowing her confidence, discipline, softness or sense of adventure.

Welcome to the dressing room. Which version of you would you like to meet today?

<i>The Founder Her:</i> sharp blazer, structured bag, decisive lipstick	<i>The Pilates Her:</i> coordinated set, slick bun, enormous water bottle
<i>The Paris Her:</i> trench coat, red lip, tiny impractical handbag	<i>The Soft-Life Her:</i> satin pyjamas, skincare, expensive candle
<i>The Party Her:</i> tiny dress, body shimmer, shoes she cannot walk in	<i>The Mysterious Her:</i> dark sunglasses, signature perfume, refuses to over-explain

You are allowed to dress for the woman you are becoming. Just make sure she wants the life attached to the outfit.

Can a Lipstick Actually Change Your Life?

A very serious investigation into a very small tube.

A lipstick cannot answer the email you have been avoiding. It cannot end a heartbreak, rescue an unfortunate haircut or place money into your bank account. *And yet, on certain mornings, lipstick achieves something suspiciously close to intervention.*

There is a reason it is rarely described as simply another product. Women call it armour, a signature, a finishing touch or the one thing they would carry onto a desert island, where one would assume hydration should be the greater concern. Lipstick occupies very little physical space, but it has an extraordinary ability to carry identity.

A red lip does not merely add colour. It announces that you have decided to be visible. A nude can make you feel composed without revealing how long composition took. A gloss can return a little playfulness to a face that has spent the entire day being responsible. Even lip balm, applied without a mirror in the back of a cab, can feel like a tiny vote for carrying on.



May be lipstick matters because the transformation is immediate. Careers take years, confidence arrives inconsistently and healing refuses to respect a calendar. Lipstick asks for less than a minute. You twist the tube, draw the outline and watch a slightly altered woman look back at you.

Her circumstances remain the same. But she may be more willing to meet them.

The pigment does not contain courage. Instead, the ritual helps us access qualities we already possess. Lipstick becomes a cue for the version of you who speaks clearly, goes to dinner alone, enters the meeting and takes the photograph. The confidence was never inside the tube.

The tube simply reminded you where you kept it.

Lipsticks also become records of our lives: the shade worn throughout a particular summer, the first expensive one bought with your own money, the one borrowed from your mother and the colour you stopped wearing because it belonged too closely to someone you no longer are.

Sometimes we repurchase a shade for continuity. *Sometimes we choose its opposite because we need evidence that something has changed.*

This is where beauty moves beyond correction and becomes self-creation. Lipstick is not always an attempt to become prettier; it can be an attempt to become more specific. Deep berry and sheer pink make entirely different sentences with the face.

So, can lipstick change your life?

It cannot build the woman or do the difficult thing. But it can interrupt a bad morning, mark a beginning, preserve a memory and give courage a colour. A lipstick cannot change the circumstances of your life.

But it can change the woman meeting them. Occasionally, that is enough to alter what happens next.



**THE DAY-TO-NIGHT PYJAMAS**

Soft enough for bed, polished enough to make doing nothing look intentional.

Worth browsing: H&M

**THE EVERYDAY TOTE**

Carries your entire world while still saying something distinctly you.

Worth browsing: Mango, Zara and homegrown accessory labels



Worth every wear

**THE PERSONALITY SUNGLASSES**

A shortcut to looking composed when your face has not received the memo.

Worth browsing: Lenskart, H&M and Mango

THE PERFECT HOOPS

Simple enough to repeat, noticeable enough to rescue an under-planned outfit.

Worth browsing: GIVA, H&M and Accessorize

**THE RELIABLE SNEAKERS**

The pair that survives airports, errands, solo dates and misleading walking itineraries.

Worth browsing: Nike, New Balance and Bershka

**THE TINTED SUNSCREEN**

Protection, polish and one less step competing for morning mirror time.

Worth browsing: Dot & Key and LoveChild Masaba

THE FRAGRANT ROLL-ON

Handles the practical responsibility while smelling worthy of your fragrance wardrobe.

Worth browsing: AntiNorm

**THE STANDARD CREAM BLUSH**

Blends quickly, travels easily and keeps the cheeks alive through the day.

Worth browsing: Gush Beauty, Glossier and Pixi

THE DEPENDABLE CLEANSER

Removes the day without making your skin feel punished for having one.

Worth browsing: The Face Shop, Laneige and SKIN1004



Worth every wear

THE LIP MASK

Overnight care that turns remembering your lips into a tiny ritual.

Worth browsing: Laneige



INVOICE.

Billed To :

The Put-Together Girl

Somewhere between composed and
overwhelmed
Currently saying, "I'm fine."

Invoice No : PTG-003

Invoice Date : Aug 22, 2026

NQ	Description	Qty	Unit Price
1.	Perception Management Fee	24/7	Self-monitoring
2.	Everything-Is-Fine Surcharge	Recurring	Emotional honesty
3.	Comparison Convenience Charge	Per Scroll	One peaceful mood
4.	Rest Guilt Penalty	Per Break	Unfinished work
5.	Perfect Timeline Tax	Monthly	Trust in your timing
6.	Over-Explanation Fee	Per Choice	Personal privacy
7.	Invisible Audience Subscription	Auto	Authenticity
8.	Constant Improvement Plan	Lifetime	Present satisfaction

Subtotal : Too much mental space

Tax : Peace, temporarily

Total : A life that looks better
than it feels

Payment Details

Payment method : Approval, perfection and emotional composure

Account Name : The Version of Me Everyone Expects

Account Number : Not applicable

Payment Status : Disputed

Thank you for your continued performance.
This invoice is now under review. All unnecessary charges may be challenged,
cancelled or formally submitted for a refund on the following page.

Requesting a refund

We keep receipts for dresses that do not fit, serums that disagree with our skin and shoes that looked considerably more comfortable online. Expectations are harder to return. There is no order number for the belief that you must always appear composed. No customer-support desk for the years spent thinking rest must be earned, success must arrive on schedule and becoming better requires remaining dissatisfied with who you are.

And yet, we keep paying with time spent monitoring ourselves, joy interrupted by comparison and mental space occupied by an audience that may not even be watching. Requesting a refund does not mean rejecting beauty, ambition or maintenance. Keep the lipstick that changes your posture, the routines that make mornings gentler and the clothes that help you feel unmistakably yourself.

Return only what was never yours.



Return the belief that being emotional makes you difficult. Return the timeline that insists everybody else is ahead. Return the pressure to emerge from every difficult season prettier, wiser and perfectly healed. You may not recover the years already spent performing these standards. Emotional customer service has a famously inconvenient policy. But the refund can arrive as an hour no longer spent overthinking how you were perceived. An outfit repeated without explanation. A purchase enjoyed without demanding transformation. A quiet decision that remains valid even when nobody understands it. The refund will not appear in your bank account. It will appear in the life you finally have enough energy to inhabit.



“

*Keep what brings pleasure.
Maintain what makes you feel
cared for.*

*But the version of you built
entirely for other people?
That charge is officially
disputed.*

TAX REFUND

The Put-Together Girl Bingo

TICK WHAT RESONATES. AWARENESS COUNTS.

<i>Bought an outfit for an imaginary occasion</i>	<i>Keeps an emergency lipstick in every bag</i>	<i>Bought a planner to fix her life</i>	<i>Booked a beauty appointment before an important event</i>	<i>Called a purchase an "investment"</i>
<i>Owens three versions of the same lip shade</i>	<i>Saved a routine she still plans to begin</i>	<i>Repeated an outfit and wondered who noticed</i>	<i>Took a cab to avoid arriving sweaty or late</i>	<i>Considered coffee emotional support</i>
<i>Completed full skincare, then doom-scrolled for an hour</i>	<i>Owens a product she still doesn't know how to use</i>	<i>FREE SPACE: *She looked effortless. It took two hours*</i>	<i>Spent longer planning the outfit than attending the plan</i>	<i>Organised her bag only for chaos to return</i>
<i>Said "five minutes" while still getting dressed</i>	<i>Added to cart after seeing exactly one reel</i>	<i>Restocked a favourite before it was actually empty</i>	<i>Planned wash day like a major event</i>	<i>Wore the same jewellery all week</i>
<i>Decided Monday would begin a complete life reset</i>	<i>Cancelled after completing the entire getting-ready routine</i>	<i>Owens a tote capable of carrying her whole existence</i>	<i>Felt instantly more alive after applying perfume</i>	<i>Has a signature look for days when creativity is unavailable</i>

If you got 5, you have put-together tendencies.

If you got 10, maintenance is part of the personality.

If you got 15+, welcome to L&M.

LIPSTICKS & MARTINIS, M.D.

Prescriptions for Modern Girl Problems

📌 Issue 03

Published per issue. Side effects may vary.

Patient's Name: You, of course **Age:** Irrelevant **Date:** When the day feels heavier than it should

Diagnosis:

Patient presents with:

- Appearance-related overthinking
- Comparison-induced dissatisfaction
- Pressure to remain effortlessly composed
- Excessive self-monitoring
- Routine-related exhaustion
- Desire to feel like herself again

Prescribed Soundtrack Medication:

1. Pretty Isn't Pretty — Olivia Rodrigo

Dosage: Once during an active comparison spiral

Administration:

- Away from the mirror
- No opening saved beauty folders
- No adding new flaws to the list

2. Just a Girl — No Doubt

Dosage: At full volume when performing womanhood correctly becomes exhausting

Administration:

- While getting ready without seeking approval
- Dramatic singing permitted
- Irritation must not be made smaller

3. Good Days — SZA

Dosage: Once when constant self-improvement occupies too much mental space

Administration:

- Low lights recommended
- While lying down or walking slowly
- No planning a better version of tomorrow-you

Disclaimer: Side effects may include renewed confidence, outfit experimentation and the sudden realisation that you were never as far from "her" as you believed.

LIPSTICKS & MARTINIS, M.D.

Prescriptions for Modern Girl Problems



Issue 03

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4. Maneater — Nelly Furtado

Dosage: Once immediately before leaving the house

Administration:

- Best outfit encouraged
- Mirror contact permitted
- No shrinking upon entering the room

5. 360 — Charli xcx

Dosage: As required during a personal-style identity crisis

Administration:

- While choosing the interesting option
- One unexpected accessory recommended
- Group-chat approval strictly unnecessary

6. Bejeweled — Taylor Swift

Dosage: Once after making yourself smaller for too long

Administration:

- Apply lip gloss before use
- Jewellery strongly encouraged
- Re-entry into your own spotlight required

7. Suddenly I See — KT Tunstall

Dosage: Whenever the woman you want to become feels impossibly far away

Administration:

- During a walk, commute or fresh beginning
- Think of how far you have already come
- Do not rush the remaining distance

Follow up: The next time you forget that becoming is allowed to be fun.



Cosmic Character Pass



YOU

Protagonist of her life

Energy Level: ★★★★★



COSMIC HOROSCOPE

The stars are not judging your spending. They are auditing what costs you peace. Every sign maintains an image: the fearless one, the reliable one, the mysterious one or the woman who somehow has everything under control. Some of these identities fit beautifully. Others have been charging your emotional account without permission. Find your sign, examine the statement and discover what the universe would finally like refunded.

Account Holder: You

Billing Cycle: Entirely too long

Cosmic Status: Eligible for reimbursement

Refund Method: Returned as time, confidence and mental space

Aries

21/03 - 19/04



Your Tax: The Urgency Surcharge, treating every inconvenience like it requires an immediate response.

Image Maintained: Fearless, decisive and already moving towards the next thing.

Cosmic Refund: The right to pause before reacting. Not every delay is defeat, and not every room requires conquering.

Taurus

20/04 - 20/05



Your Tax: The Comfort Premium, products that make ordinary life feel expensive.

Image Maintained: Calm, tasteful and entirely unbothered.

Cosmic Refund: Keep the pleasures. Return the guilt attached to enjoying them. Softness has always been part of your operating system.

Gemini

21/05 - 20/06



Your Tax: The Reinvention Subscription every few business days.

Image Maintained: Interesting, current and never predictable.

Cosmic Refund: Permission to enjoy one identity without immediately replacing it. Consistency will not make you boring.

Cancer

21/06–22/07



Your Tax: The Emotional Support Fee, remembering everybody's feelings

Image Maintained: Caring, dependable and always available.

Cosmic Refund: Responsibility for moods you did not create.

Leo

23/07–22/08



Your Tax: The Visibility Surcharge, making every entrance memorable and every outfit worthy of its audience.

Image Maintained: Confident, radiant and impossible to overlook.

Cosmic Refund: The need for applause to confirm what you already know. Keep the dramatic outfit

Virgo

23/08–22/09



Your Tax: The Perfection Processing Fee, fixing every detail before allowing yourself to feel finished.

Image Maintained: Prepared, capable and suspiciously good at handling everything.

Cosmic Refund: The belief that rest begins only after perfection. Some tasks can remain slightly wrong while you remain entirely worthy.

Libra

23/09–22/10



Your Tax: The Aesthetic Harmony Charge, ensuring the outfit, room, and public opinion all coordinate.

Image Maintained: Effortlessly tasteful and impossible to question.

Cosmic Refund: The hours lost trying to make every choice universally appealing.

Scorpio

23/10–21/11



Your Tax: The Mystery Maintenance Fee, carefully revealing enough to intrigue, but never enough to feel exposed.

Image Maintained: Controlled, unreadable and one step ahead.

Cosmic Refund: Being known by the right people is not the same as losing your power.

Sagittarius

22/11–21/12



Your Tax: The Spontaneity Handling Charge, appearing endlessly free even when your calendar request notice.

Image Maintained: Adventurous, optimistic and ready for anything.

Cosmic Refund: Staying home occasionally does not revoke your interesting-person status.

Capricorn

22/12–19/01



Your Tax: The Productivity Premium, believing everything, must produce measurable returns.

Image Maintained: Competent, ambitious and never caught unprepared.

Cosmic Refund: Your worth does not increase with your output, even if your calendar disagrees.

Aquarius

20/01–18/02



Your Tax: The Originality Levy, avoiding anything too popular in case similarity threatens your individuality.

Image Maintained: Independent, unexpected and culturally ahead.

Cosmic Refund: You are allowed to like the viral thing; your personality will survive.

Pisces

19/02–20/03



Your Tax: The Fantasy-Self Subscription, falling in love with imagined lives, future routines and women you could become.

Image Maintained: Dreamy, intuitive and halfway inside another universe.

Cosmic Refund: The distance between your imagined self and the woman already here.

Disclaimer: This horoscope is a creative, fashion-led interpretation for inspiration and self-expression, not professional astrological or financial advice. The universe is not responsible for purchases made during Mercury retrograde.



L&M CAFÉ

At L&M, we take your diet very seriously.

Forget the intermittent fasts and all-greens.

We're talking cocktails and desserts, tailor-made inside the L&M Café: serving you rituals, moods and mindsets. Because honestly, is life even complete without a good course?

Each issue brings you a new menu, designed exclusively around the theme we're obsessing over.

This weekend? The put-together girl, served à la carte.

Inside, you'll find:

- The Ingredients
- The Chef's Intent (our intent, your recipe)
- Who It Serves (except this time, you're the one serving, Queen)
- The Price (find it yourself, because not everything can be bought)

Personal taste is required if you want a reservation.

Refunds available on unnecessary standards, not desserts.

Bon appétit!



Crème de la Confiance



A smooth confidence blend, finished with the exact amount of audacity.

Ingredients

One outfit that changes
your posture

Signature lipstick

Fragrance with excellent
staying power

A playlist that knows who
you are

Five uninterrupted minutes
with the mirror

Chef's Intent

1. Begin with the outfit that makes you stand differently.
2. Add fragrance and lipstick until the outside catches up with the energy within.
3. Let the soundtrack interrupt any unnecessary self-doubt.
4. Enter the room before confidence feels completely ready.

Serves presence with a polished finish

Price: Allowing yourself to be noticed



La Mise en Place



A calmly arranged preparation, served before the day gets ideas of its own.

Ingredients

Tomorrow's outfit, already
decided

A bag packed with actual
essentials

One calendar glance

A clear corner of the room

Water within reach

An exit time that includes
reality

Chef's Intent

1. Place tomorrow's decisions where morning-you can find them.
2. Prepare the bag before it becomes an archaeological emergency.
3. Clear one surface to give the mind somewhere quiet to land.
4. Stop once the day feels supported, not controlled.

*Serves Readiness without the panic
Price: Ten minutes of tonight*



Le Goût de Soi



A signature taste, seasoned personally and never served by committee.

Ingredients

One trend worth borrowing

A personal twist

The item you repeatedly
reach for

An opinion formed without
consultation

Curiosity in generous
amounts

Group-chat approval,
omitted

Chef's Intent

1. Begin with whatever genuinely catches your eye.

2. Remove the pressure to recreate it exactly.

3. Add something familiar until the inspiration
begins feeling like you.

4. Serve before somebody else's opinion alters the
flavour.

Serves Individuality with a side of experimentation

Price: Trusting your own taste



Repos Sans Reçu



A guilt-free rest course, served without proof of productivity.

Ingredients

Comfortable clothes
Phone placed face down
One unfinished list
Something warm or sweet
Time with no measurable
outcome
Zero explanations

Chef's Intent

1. Leave one task unfinished and observe that the world remains operational.
2. Choose comfort without presenting a justification.
3. Let the hour pass without photographing, improving or monetising it.
4. Return only when rest has done what pressure could not.

Serves Emotional ease with a soft finish
Price: Releasing the need to earn it



HASTA LUEGO!

A Note to her



We began this issue by asking what it costs to look like you have everything together. The receipt was long, but the conclusion was surprisingly simple.

Keep the lipstick, the matching set and every little ritual that makes life feel more like yours. Return only the pressure to perform them perfectly.

Being put together was never about remaining polished through every moment. It is knowing yourself well enough to find your way back when the outfit fails, the routine disappears and life looks nothing like the saved folder.

So, curate your shelf. Enjoy beautiful things. Become as many women as your twenties allow, but never treat the woman you already are like an unfinished project.

Receipt reviewed. Unnecessary charges disputed.

Lipstick reapplied.

Until the next L&M Saturday.

Yours truly,

Lipsticks & Martinis



We'll return on the first Saturday of September with new pages, new rituals and another part of womanhood worth examining together.

Until then, repeat the outfit, use the expensive product and choose what feels like you before consulting the imaginary audience.

We'll be right here.

Bibliography



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Lipsticks & Martinis

serving every first and third Saturday

L&M

A LADY'S BEST FRIEND



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