

PRISCA TURAZZI

LET BLOOD TURN INTO GOLD



PRISCA TURAZZI

LET BLOOD TURN INTO GOLD

« »

Self-published by Prisca Turazzi in 2026

Prague
Czech Republic

weirdo. | priscaturazzi.com

© Prisca Turazzi, 2026

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the author.

Cover image: © *Man's Face Reflecting on Mirror*
by Drigo Diniz, Araxá, MG, Brazil / Pexels

Proofread by [Sue Browning Editing](#)

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

LET BLOOD TURN INTO GOLD

How can perfection be both reassuring and fearsome at the same time? And how can imperfection be an act of rebellious freedom?

That is what Oliver thought when he met them for the first time. The stranger entered the workshop with a quiet, hesitant reverence on a spring day that still carried the sharp bite of winter. He stared as they closed the white oak door gently, sealing the howling wind outside.

Instinctively, Oliver rushed to cover his cracked hands in delicate, skin-coloured gloves. People were usually disgusted by them, hesitant to treat him even as human. A broken person didn't deserve kindness or appreciation around here. Because of this, his services were in great demand: he made magical masks, able to bend reality and blur the imperfections of the soul that tended to emerge in the eyes and small expressions.

His domain was perfection. The masks were symmetrical, colourless, flawless: the peak of centuries of art's search for absolute perfection. They were not meant to transform the soul, but to shield its inherent insecurities—a seamless blending into an ideal of humanity.

The stranger was now floating among the exposed masks, their eyes holding a peculiar, unreadable coldness.

With time, clients requested different extra shades to add to their masks. Oliver was able to implement their requests with surgical precision, so as not to mar the perfection of the main outlines. His regular clients browsed the samples with bubbling, almost frantic excitement, trying them on like life-altering dresses: *Which one makes me look more empathetic? Which one will make them respect me? Which one would make people fall in love with me?*

Oliver's own mask was the first ever created. He didn't remember how; he was just a lost child at the time. Abandoned, barely alive, and then sold, like a second-hand toy, to the only ones willing to collect any stray puppy for a contorted sense of self-worth. A toy they hoped to manipulate and shape into their precious desire of perfection, by proxy. Yet, sometimes, something just does not come to life as expected.

Oliver's first mask, therefore, was himself. His mask was *perfectly* blank, designed to reflect others' expectations of *perfection* in him. To work, however, the mask needed particular and constant care: the surface had to be deeply cleaned. No fingerprint, no scrape, no stain, no dust, no trace of bacteria could remain. The ritual was exhausting, but he couldn't help himself. Too afraid to reveal a single flaw, too deeply convinced he was the broken, disgusting, shameful creature everyone had always branded him as.

Oliver tried to identify the stranger through the frames of his own mask. Anxiety clenched his heart, its claws ready to tear him open at the first trace of judgement and let humiliation flood in. He knew his hands would soon grow sweaty and slick, and his voice would crack, making him embarrassed. Focusing on the new client was just one way to deal with the cold, death-like feeling creeping into his core.

They kept walking around, with the same inexpressive attitude, looking at every single mask and yet avoiding touching any. If there was any perfection in that person, it was certainly not visible. A wild crown of dark curls framed their features. Each lock was unique, defying any imposed ideal. And yet, to Oliver's eyes, those very imperfections formed a strange paradox: a harmony that shouldn't exist but somehow did. Even the clothes broke any fashion standard, as if three different people had chosen the outfit. Under the square-cut leather jacket, Oliver caught a glimpse of the bright red waves of a dress. To complete the strange combination, rainbow-painted sneakers adorned their feet.

When the stranger finally approached him, Oliver barely managed to stifle a gasp as he gained a clear view of their mask: it was broken into three irregular pieces, as if struck by a small hammer precisely on the tip of the nose. What was even more bizarre was the magic struggling beneath the damage: the mask material was frantically trying to blur and harmonize the flaws of three different personalities. It wasn't even clear to Oliver whether the client was female or male. He had to lean closer to see the dark, shining fill flowing through the fractures. Had they tried to repair it with *gold*?

"Good morning. I have an issue with these masks," they said in a straight tone of voice, which made Oliver feel uncomfortable. He couldn't decide if the stranger was seeking understanding or, instead, accusing him. "Every time I buy a new one," they added, "it keeps breaking down."

He made a mistake. The thought struck his mind like a thunderbolt. He had to (he made a mistake, he made a mistake) apologize first, to avoid any shouting at him. "I am sorry. It's the first time I've heard of anything like this happening," he replied in tight and clipped words, as he struggled for air. He should (he made a mistake, he made a mistake, he made

a mistake) have immediately focused on how (he made a mistake, HE MADE A MISTAKE) to repair the fault (he made a mistake, he made a mistake) and clean it (HE MADE A MISTAKE, HE MADE A MISTAKE). Why was the stranger (HE MADE A MISTAKE, HE MADE A MISTAKE, HE MADE A MISTAKE) still staring at his face? Was the (HE MADE A MISTAKE, HE MADE A MISTAKE) *mask even working?*

“Can you help me, please? To be honest, you’re the only hope I have left. I really need a mask that can make me look...” Their voice cracked. Their gaze dropped to their hands, which started fidgeting frantically, the fingers clawing at each other as if trying to lock themselves in a grip.

For the first time, the familiar feeling of guilt was pushed aside by that unexpected reaction. He couldn’t tell if the stranger was truly overwhelmed or if they were only pretending to be helpless to manipulate him and get what they wanted. Nothing was going the way he was used to, which made him feel deeply uneasy.

“I usually buy everything online, but...” continued the stranger. It seemed they had regained control, hiding their hands back in the pockets of the leather jacket. “I think I need something personalized. Is that possible?”

“Yes, indeed,” said Oliver, feeling the sudden, intense need to scratch the skin of his neck.

The stranger’s gaze never rose to meet his eyes, remaining fixed instead on his chin. For a moment, he wondered if they had some kind of issue with their vision or if there was something wrong with his own appearance. The insistent, cold stare was burning his skin.

He cleared his throat, clenching his fists and making the glove material creak. “May I have your mask to analyse it?” he asked in a firm voice. “And may I know your name? I need it to search in the shop’s records.”

The stranger hesitated. "Sometimes, I don't know exactly who I am. But... I believe you will find my purchases under the name of Delta."

Delta. What a weird name. Names usually tell a lot about a person. *Nomen omen*, so the saying goes. Everything about them defied any comforting sense of normalcy. And still... even that odd name fit them like a glove, in an unpredictable game of balance. Just like their face: three shades of personality that could belong to different people and yet made a kind of sense together.

Even if reluctant, Delta drew their hands out of the pockets and slowly unzipped the leather jacket, revealing a deeper golden gleam beneath the shadow.

Oliver's throat tightened the moment he recognized the gold filling of linear scars running across their neck. The marks looked like old ligature marks, almost cutting through the skin. A sudden heat surged across his shoulders and down his arms, igniting the scars he had once carved into himself on days when no chemical soap felt strong enough to cleanse him. How could someone be willing to fill those marks with gold, like a precious memory or a celebration of weakness? How could someone be proud of their failings?

Oliver felt his mind grow dizzy, completely unable to take it in as Delta slowly began to take off the shattered mask. The face underneath was something truly inexplicable, defying every dogma of aesthetics. The three personalities hadn't been erased; instead, their subtle shades had melted together into a complex, unreadable constellation of features and imperfections. It was a visual map of flaws yet somehow achieving that bizarre balance he had first sensed in the wildness of their external appearance.

An embarrassed smile slipped onto Delta's true face as they handed him the mask, their hands slightly shaking. Oliver

caught sight of their wrists: long, pale scars traced with gold.

What the hell was happening?

He took the mask, touching it only with his fingertips. The violent shatters now seemed to lose their strange aura, shrinking into nothing more than inert fragments only meant to be fixed. Even the gold filling was simply a cold glue. The mysterious equilibrium was now lost.

“Thank you,” Delta said softly. “I really appreciate your help. Please, contact me as soon as you have any update.”

Before he could reply, Delta had already turned away and walked quickly to the white oak door. Oliver watched the weird apparition slip out of the immaculate workshop, leaving behind the stale silence he had grown used to.

« »

The mask was simply perfect, except for the cracks. Even so, Oliver felt the pressure to understand why the material had failed on Delta’s face. He spent days and nights obsessed with what had happened in the workshop, with the unsolved mystery of that new person. He was able to list all their flaws with surgical precision, and yet he couldn’t tell how to fix them. It was as if any correction would transform Delta into something they weren’t at all, instead of enhancing them. Like polishing a rose would just make it look fake, something completely artificial. It was a game of contrasts doomed to be lost.

Oliver picked up the shattered mask again, examining the inside. For hours, he studied the dark, shining fill running through the cracks. He couldn’t believe at first that it was actual gold, so he scraped it with a scalpel and examined it under the electronic microscope. There was glue, indeed, but mixed with gold powder and... some kind of natural magic. Otherwise, the mask shouldn’t work at all. Usually, once a

mask was modelled and refined and then broken, which happens only rarely, it would cease to function immediately.

His thoughts crawled back to Delta's scars. The same peculiar magic had likely been used to apply the gold and seal those wounds. Magic, in this world, was incredibly rare, and just as with Oliver, it stemmed from dark, traumatic inner lands. One part of him wished to know more about Delta and how they had seized that power, but a deeper part of him was absolutely convinced he was unworthy of any kind of connection. Every time he had tried to get close to someone else, it had ended only in stripping away a piece of his sanity and faith. No good person, he believed, would ever be interested in someone like him, either as a friend or a partner.

He was too badly damaged. His gaze fell on his own hands, the skin burned raw and cracked from the relentless washing. Even moving his fingers was painful, and yet he couldn't stop or ignore the feeling of being dirty. Of being disgusting. Pain, with time, began to offer a twisted sort of relief. If it hurts, he still can feel after all. If it hurts, it's purifying. Oliver wondered what would happen if he covered his hands with gold instead of hiding them in gloves. What would people say?

You did this to yourself, aren't you ashamed? What would people say about your family? Cover them, I don't want to see this. It makes me sick; it makes everyone sick.

He was revolting, like vomit, like the smell of rotten things and body fluids, like the viscid and the filth, and the scraping noises... Oliver's stomach suddenly flipped upside down, and his throat knotted. (He was disgusting) If he touched something gross, he washed it away. (He was disgusting, he was disgusting) But how could he wash his own self away? (He was disgusting, he was disgusting, HE WAS DISGUSTING, HE WAS DISGUSTING) The skin on his hands was a constellation of red scabs, an infinite map of imperfections. (HE WAS DISGU-

STING, HE WAS DISGUSTING) He had to scratch them, bring the fresh flesh to light, to let it grow better scabs. (HE WAS DISGUSTING) But he knew that it wouldn't be perfect, it's just an illusion. (HE WAS DISGUSTING, HE WAS DISGUSTING, HE WAS DISGUSTING, HE WAS DISGUSTING) *But at least he would stop feeling it.* (HE WAS DISGUSTING) Oliver let the mask fall. Slowly, he began to dig his nails into the wounds. The pain struck him like a shiver. (HE WAS DISGUSTING, HE WAS DISGUSTING) The blood started to flow in tears every time a scab was ripped away. He didn't care because it was fading. (HE WAS DISGUSTING, HE WAS DISGUSTING, HE WAS DISGUSTING) The more scars he reopened, the more the awful feeling vanished into the back of his mind. (HE WAS DISGUSTING, he was disgusting) Suddenly, he felt himself again. Disoriented, in pain, his hands covered in blood. He was ripping breaths from the air as if he'd been underwater for too long.

He'd done it again; he couldn't stop himself, couldn't protect himself.

Numbed by the shame, he could only stare at his shaking hands. It was the same as ever. A thought was enough to send him into that self-destructive spiral, leaving him with the harsh, inevitable consequences. Now, he had to wash away what he had just done, even though he knew it would worsen the condition of his raw skin. He hated that skin, he hated those thoughts, he hated himself for falling for it every single time. How much a simple thought could cost...Warm tears pricked at his eyes, and he clenched his fists.

And then he noticed the drops on the mask. At first, he gasped, horrified by the gross contamination of the precious magical material, which was fine and clear like frost. The purity of perfection was stained by his wicked blood. The drops collected into the shape of Delta's eyes, on their lips. He lo-

oked at the irregular slipstreams they left behind, which made the flaws even more evident. In a certain, weird way, he realized those flaws looked different from what he remembered.

A curious, illogical possibility occurred to Oliver.

What if Delta's features could change?

The masks he had built so far were founded on a rigid structure, meant only to smooth out constant imperfections in a person's face. For Delta, Oliver wondered if the mask should be flexible instead, engineered to respond to a wider, shifting range of features. There must be a way to overlap different schemes—different faces—in order to let them activate based on the viewing angle, he was sure.

The concept instantly reminded him of those old postcards: images that appeared to change with the slightest movement.

A kind of lenticular mask. Was it even possible?

« »

The white oak door opened this time not with a hesitant reverence, but with a firm pull. They stepped inside with the ease of a dream, still wrapped in the square-cut leather jacket he remembered so well. Underneath, Oliver could see a long, pink sweater adorned with unicorns and a pair of dark blue jeans. They were wearing make-up, a more refined and elegant kind. Delta smiled when they saw him.

Oliver couldn't tell whether they were happy to see him or not. Their face remained hard to read. Still, something warm stirred in his chest. He had waited weeks for this, living with his fears the entire time. After spending several nights working obsessively on the prototype of the new mask and, in the end, crashing for a whole day of sleep, he had run to send them an email, requesting a new appointment.

And here they were, ten minutes early. While he had been

burning all his mental energy on the prototype, he had even found himself wondering if Delta wasn't just a hallucination. If he had been trapped in a far too vivid daydream. And yet, in the workshop's records, he had managed to recover purchases made under that same odd name.

They were real.

"Good evening. I am sorry for bothering you at closing time," they said, hesitating for a second before approaching the counter. "I'm honestly deadly curious."

A true smile—not the condescending or polite kind he usually wore—slipped onto Oliver's face. During their first meeting, he had found Delta's attitude awkward and unsettling. Now, he could see their approach was just radically honest. A rarity in this society, a sort of primitive grace.

"I took my time to figure out the reason why a normal mask doesn't seem to fit on you," Oliver revealed, his voice tending to crack under pressure. "And I create a personalized prototype for you to try."

Delta lifted an eyebrow, folding their hands and laying them on the counter's board. The gold glimmered from the wrists, underneath the sleeves. Their cheeks were suddenly tinted with a light shade of blush. "Really? I feel honoured, indeed."

"Trust me, Delta," commented Oliver, "the honour is mine."

He lifted the prototype and laid it with gentle care in front of Delta. The lenticular surface caught the lights of the shop and scattered them in an unpredictable way. Delta's eyes lingered on it, widening with genuine awe.

After a moment, they looked back at him. "It looks too precious even to touch."

Oliver realised, almost unwillingly, that he felt the same about them. There was something otherworldly about Delta, as if they didn't quite belong to that dimension. It didn't matter

how imperfect their features were: they looked exactly as they should have done. Any attempt to polish would have stripped away what made them real, leaving behind a plastic imitation. He stood there, wondering how something so flawed could hold such undeniable value. And he, who always disapproved of imperfection, was paralysed in pure admiration.

Delta took a slow breath and picked up the mask, turning it around and placing it against their face. It settled seamlessly, almost like a second skin. The material vanished from sight, imperceptible to the eye. Oliver felt a deep relief as the mask reacted perfectly to Delta's face. The mask smoothed the flaws with a graceful touch without overwhelming them. As he suspected, the polish added a weird effect, presenting a face that was ordinary, unremarkable easy to overlook.

"I can't believe it is working," laughed Delta in sincere excitement. "Does it make me look *normal*?"

"I would say so," Oliver replied, trying to ignore the mixed feelings swirling within him. A sense of disappointment insinuated his thoughts. It should have been obvious that they would desire to blend into society. After all, they had come looking for a mask to hide behind. "Is that what you want?"

Delta seemed unsettled by the question, their fingers lingering at the thin border where the mask pressed against their neck. "Well, I would rather be myself. It just makes it easier, you know?"

Oliver looked at the golden scars decorating their throat and found himself asking: "Why?"

Delta's eyes turned dark for the first time, giving their expression a bittersweet flavour. For a second, it felt as though they were climbing into Oliver's eyes, an unexpected, piercing contact that made the air between them feel thin. "When I'm wearing the mask, people don't feel uncomfortable. They don't stare. They don't look closer. They don't... judge."

His eyes drifted from the ordinary hollow face of the mask down to Delta's wrists, where the gold was most vivid, stitching the skin together. He looked then at his own hands, still covered by the skin-toned gloves. The raw skin underneath was stinging as usual, the scabs scratching against the magical fabric with every single movement.

"And what about the gold?" he asked again, his voice unsteady. He knew he was overstepping, yet he had never felt so close to anyone before, even though they had just met. There was something between the two of them, a connection on imperceptible frequencies. "Wouldn't it have been easier just to hide the scars?"

Delta sighed calmly and reached for him across the counter. Oliver didn't pull away as they grabbed his hands, cradling them as their thumbs traced the shape of his knuckles through the fabric. Normally, the sensation would have sent a jolt of panic through him, a need to pull away and wash. Instead, he felt stunned by the warmth of the physical touch, something he had always tried to avoid and yet secretly craved. It made him profoundly vulnerable, but somehow, he knew he could trust it. Despite their fascinating mess, Delta felt like the only person he could truly let in.

"You know, at first, when I used to hurt myself just to make what I was feeling inside visible, I did feel so ashamed. And, yes, I tried to hide it as well."

Delta held Oliver's hands over their palms, exposing the golden scars at their own wrists. These weren't just artistic marks: they were cuts. The thickest lines ran lengthwise along the forearms, shimmering like rivers of light that had once been of blood. And the ones across their throat were clearly traces of a cord.

"But after a while, hiding hurts even more than the wounds," they continued. "Then, I realized that just because I'm broken,

it doesn't mean I am less valuable. On the contrary: I turned my scars into my greatest worth."

Oliver felt the magical fabric of his gloves grow too tight, too warm, too rough. Just too *wrong*. As if under a spell, he found himself peeling them off, revealing the raw skin and the scabs beneath. He felt free, for the first time, to actually feel: the chaos, the vulnerability, the *anger*. He couldn't stop the tears from crawling between his eyelids.

"How..." he muttered, overwhelmed by the rush of emotions, "...how can you accept *this*?"

Oliver felt Delta's hands reach for his face and gently take off the mask he had worn all his life to be what other people wanted him to be. Because he was disgusting, he was unworthy; because, in the darkest corners of his heart, he had always known he would never be enough. Nobody would ever love him, if they knew, if they truly saw him.

As the mask slipped away, he grabbed a breath, keeping it captive down inside his lungs, too terrified to let it out. Delta paused, their gaze lingering like a traveller admiring a beloved place after a long journey. Then, they took off their mask as well.

"This is what we are, and there is nothing wrong with it," they said with a crooked smile. "If I hide the scars, I will forget where I've come from. And if I forget that, I will lose myself under a mask."

Delta kept looking at him and smiling with a divine tenderness. It was a look Oliver had never dared to imagine for himself. "You are actually so beautiful, you know?"

At those words, the breath Oliver had been holding finally broke. He began to sob uncontrollably, his chest aching while heavy tears dropped onto the polished surface of the counter. Delta rushed around the side of the counter and wrapped him in a tight embrace. Oliver could only let himself melt into their arms; his hands clutched at their back. He cried, he

screamed out all the suffering, and Delta never stepped away. They held the pain as if it were their own. Eventually, his cries softened into ragged breaths. As the surge of emotion drained away, the chaos in his mind began to settle. He felt mostly just embarrassed and nervous.

Outside, the wind brushed against the white oak door. Oliver could feel it now: the cold, yes, but also the promise of spring blooming beneath it. Something inside his heart was growing stronger. An idea, powerful but still fragile. The idea of self-worth.

Delta's arms were still around him, steady and warm, unbothered by the dampness of tears or the tremor in his breath. He slipped from the embrace, wiping the tears with his wrists. The saline liquid burned slightly over the cracks on his hands.

"I'm... I'm sorry," Oliver muttered, feeling the old shame reach for him again. "I shouldn't have... I didn't..."

"Don't worry," Delta said softly.

That simple sentence settled deep, finding places Oliver hadn't known were hollow. They soothed like balsam on open wounds. He couldn't believe what had just happened: he had revealed a spark of the darkest corners of his soul to a perfect stranger, and as if that weren't weird enough already, that stranger was still there, willing to take care of his emotions without judging or being annoyed.

Delta didn't look away: their gaze was glued to his bare face as if memorizing the very map of the man he had tried so hard to hide. Was he deluding himself, or was there actually a warmth in their eyes? Oliver felt a longing to be close to them again, and not just for a hug. How long had it been since he'd felt an honest desire for intimacy towards anyone?

You are actually so beautiful, you know?

Surely, they hadn't meant it. It must have been kindness, nothing more; a fleeting compassion born of the moment. It

had to be.

Delta's voice interrupted his stream of thoughts. "May I ask you something?" He just nodded, too embarrassed to speak.

"What's your name?"

Oliver found himself smiling; he had even forgotten to introduce himself. Clients rarely cared about who was behind the counter. When he answered, Delta's face lit up, and they repeated his name, rolling it on their tongue like a rare, fine taste.

"I have another question," they continued, taking a step towards him.

Oliver nodded again, goosebumps racing along his arms and neck. It was intimidating to see his own desires coming to life before his eyes. One part of him wished for them not to stop, for them to get closer and closer, to touch him, to let him touch them; yet another part of his mind was terrified they would change their mind, wouldn't find him *beautiful* anymore, would be disgusted like everyone else. He wouldn't be able to survive that.

"I know that everything is weird right now, and we don't even know each other that well," Delta admitted, their hands searching again for his to hold. "I've been hurt in the past, and I promised myself long ago not to get myself involved. However, I feel different with you, a sort of deep connection. I mean... I guess I just wanted to know if you are already seeing someone else."

Oliver's breath hitched. Of all the questions he had expected, this was the most startling. He looked at Delta and realized that no word would be enough. Instead of replying, he leaned forward. It was a hesitant movement at first, the ghost of his old fear flickering one last time, but then he closed the distance. For an instant, Oliver forgot how to breathe. The kiss felt unhurried and real, tasting of coffee and lip balm, of warmth carried through cold air. The most honest thing he

had ever made. Delta didn't flinch; they simply melted into it.

For the first time, he didn't feel the urge to disappear; their presence anchored him to himself and the moment. He understood then that not every fracture needed to be hidden behind a façade of perfection. Some were thresholds.

Some were beginnings.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Prisca Turazzi spent a decade in the publishing industry, where they held a variety of roles. Following their experience as the director of Adiaphora Edizioni and owner of Libreria Altrove, they moved to the Czech Republic to focus on their academic career.

Currently, they are completing a Master's Degree in Psychology and starting new writing projects in English.