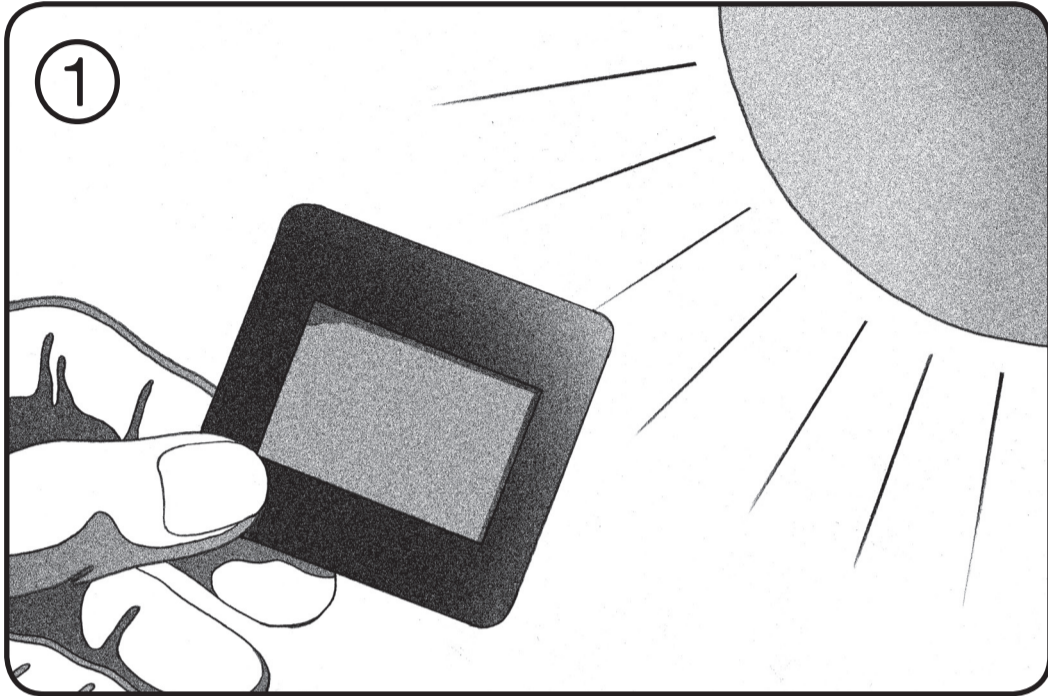


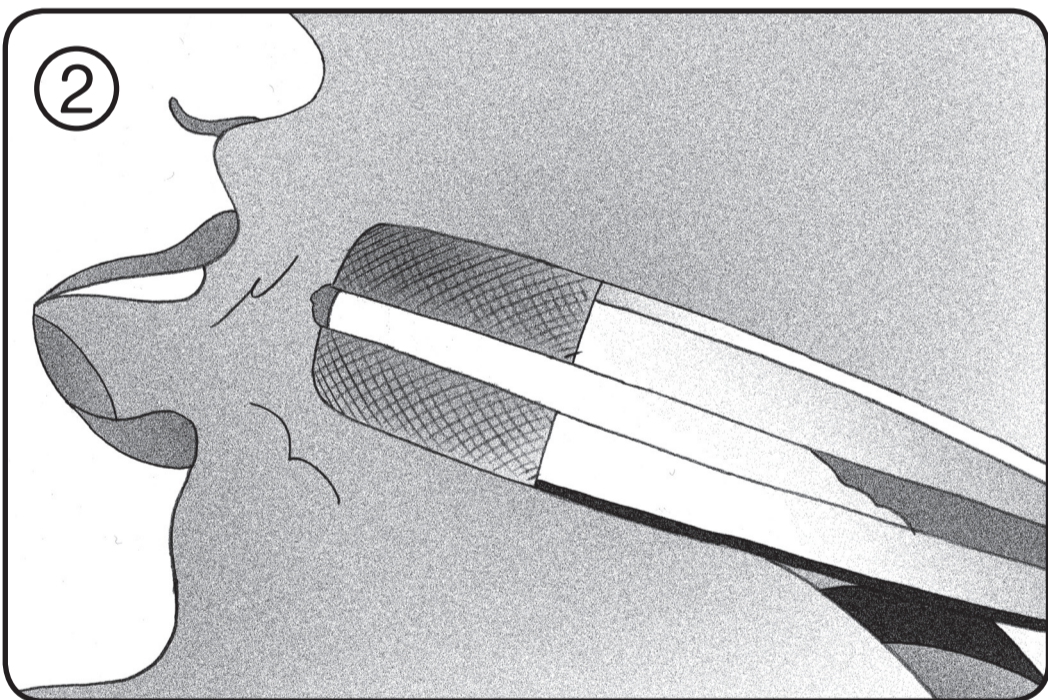
Soft Prison

Home Performance Kit

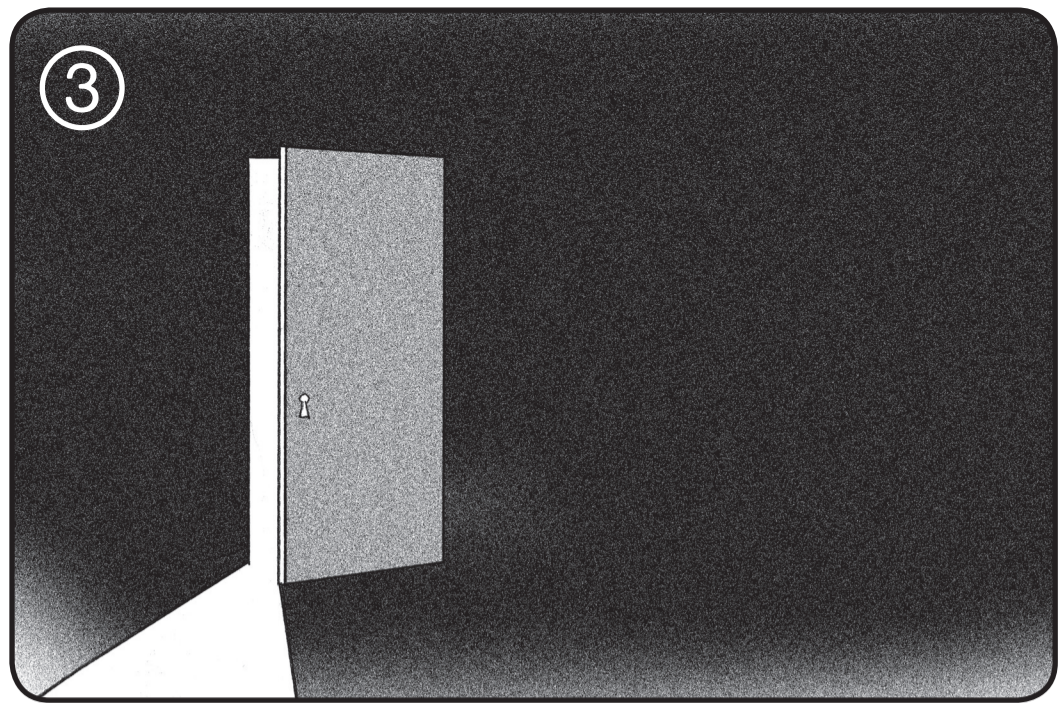
Operating Instructions:



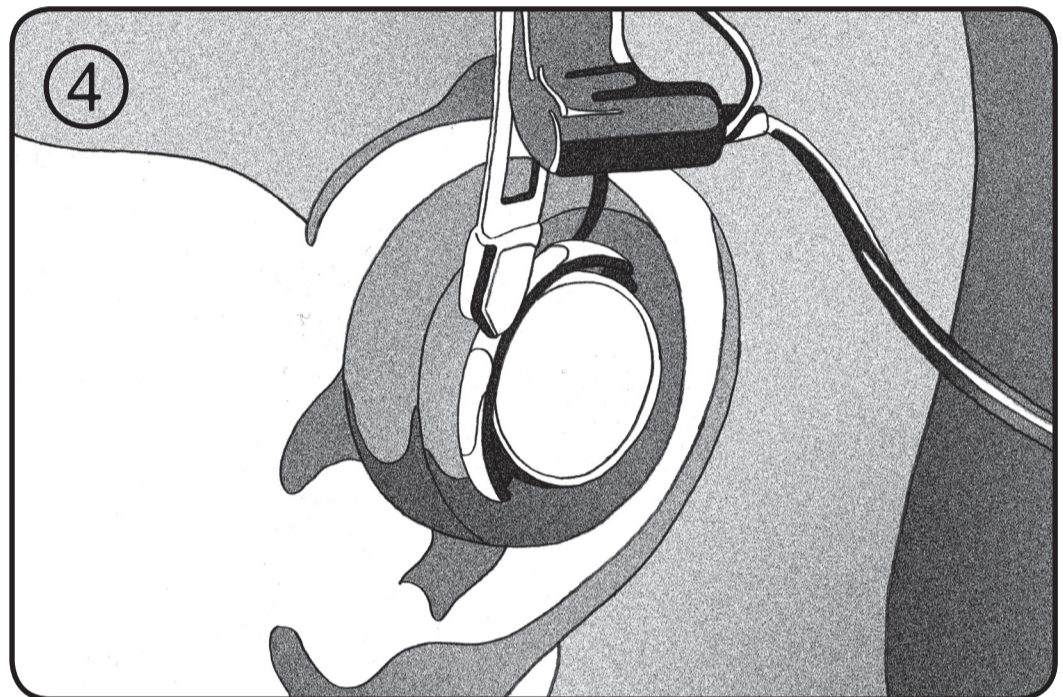
1. Place the slide under direct sunlight or under the strongest available light source. Recommended charging time: 3–4 hours.



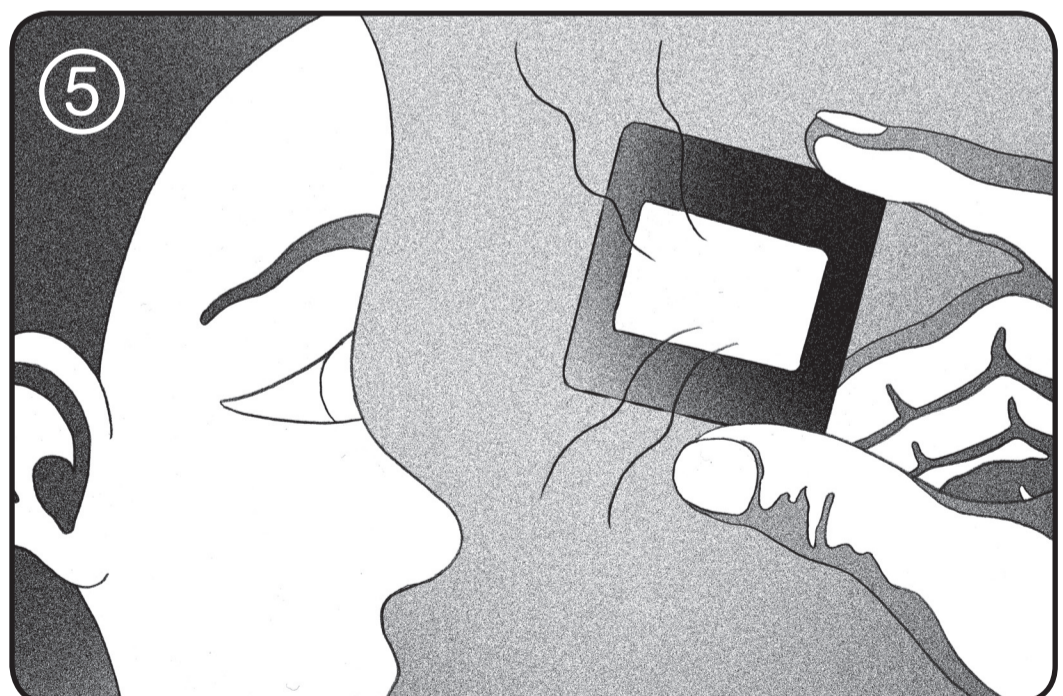
2. Record the performance instructions (see back) in your own voice. Use the nearest available device with this capability. Do not trouble yourself with the quality of the recording. Mistakes are to be expected. If you make a mistake simply return to the beginning of the last sentence and continue from there. Read slowly and deliberately but do not linger on the meaning of this text. Remember, you are also the audience of your performance and you don't want to ruin it for yourself. Make every effort to forget the words once they leave your mouth.



3. Locate the darkest space in your home. This will be your performance space. Make sure you are completely isolated from every other living creature.



4. Play back the recording using headphones. Use the nearest available device with this capability.



5. Place the slide at eye level at a distance of approximately 50 cm. Do not close your eyes. Listen carefully and follow your instructions. Remember you are both the performer and the audience. You don't want to disappoint yourself.



OJOBACA

Performance Instructions:

You are the performer.

You are the performer.
You are a creator of illusions.
To create an illusion, you must truly believe the illusion you are creating.
If you are not convinced, then how will it be realistic for the audience?

You can create illusionary objects for your audience.
You can create the illusion of a box.
Now, imagine that you are inside the box.
To create this illusion, you must truly believe that you are inside the box.

Imagine how you would interact with the real thing.
Run your hands along the walls of the box. Do they feel rough or smooth? Are they hot or cold? Where do the corners meet?
Is there a lid?

You are trying to find a way out of this box.

You say to yourself:
“I am the performer.
I am trapped in a box.
I want to escape.”

How would you escape from this box?
Remember, escape is not an easy illusion to master.
To escape you have to imagine your body twisting and contorting.
You have to imagine your muscles stretching and straining.
You must feel the full weight of your body.
Your face must indicate the painful effort that is being made.

Look carefully at the glowing light.
This might be an opening.
This might be a way out.

Will you fit through that opening?
It doesn't seem very large.

To fit through that opening, you have to give yourself a different shape.
Don't think that this is easy.
To escape you will have to forget your current shape.

Your arms fall down flaccid.
You remain motionless.

You decide to forget.
You decide to forget your present form.
You decide to give yourself a different form.

You want to see new colors.
You want to hear new sounds.

You feel a deep urge to run across fields and through trees.
You feel that you are slowly entering a different state.

You breathe calmly and deeply.
Your body is completely loose.
Your arms and legs are slack.
You contract your chest and release it.
You contract your stomach and release it.

There is no perceptible trembling in your arms.
Your circulation is good.
Your digestion is regular.
Your look is blank and meaningless, a mask-like expression.

You make all the motions of biting into an invisible fruit.
You wipe the imaginary sweat from your brow.

You ask yourself, “Will I be different?”
You answer, “Yes, I will.”

You feel a current of cold air coming from the bright opening.
You practice chattering your teeth.
You practice shivering your body.
You concentrate on the blank field of light.
An image starts to become visible.
A figure begins to reveal itself, as if pushing through a dense fog.

You recognize this figure.

This is you and you have a different shape.
This is you and you are much smaller.
This is you and you have a different posture.
This is you and your limbs move nimbly and freely.
This is you and you walk without knowing where you are going.
This is you and you are naked and covered in hair.
This is you and you are in a thick forest.

In the forest, you examine your surroundings with newfound awe.
You sink your feet into the moist soil.
You eat leaves and grass.
You use your thumbs to dig out roots.
You strip the bark from twigs and suck on the sap.
You give out loud grunts of pleasure.
You rest on your haunches and look up at the distant sky.
You shiver with cold and fright and you are delighted.
You watch the sun go down and you are delighted.
Under the pale moonlight, your eyes cast an otherworldly glare and you are delighted.

You say to yourself:
“I am the performer.
I have escaped from the box.”

You start digging a hole.
This hole is your burrow.
This hole will protect you from predators, intruders, enemies and the like.

In the darkness of your burrow, you twitch your scalp, nose and ears in response to the slightest noise.

You realize that you are still defenseless and weak.
You lack all the tools and skills to survive.
You lack the strength or will to withstand any hardship.
Your skin, devoid of moisture, suffers many fissures and grows green in tone.
Your face contracts and assumes an expression of disgust.
At the same time, your arms and legs become violently stiff, as would be the case with a child forced to swallow a detested dose of medicine.

You fix your eyes on a bright spot of light shining through a crack in the wall of your burrow. You squint your eyes. Your eyes become moist and bright, your look is fixed, your pupils are dilated.

You look carefully at the glowing light.
A dark figure reveals itself as if pushing through a dense fog.

You crouch and sniff and growl.
It comes closer.
You wail and howl.
It comes closer.
The figure copies your sniff and growl and your wail and howl.
You claw at the ground.
It claws at the ground.

You recognize this figure.
You recognize its smell.
You recognize its touch.
It bites you in a playful manner.
You bite it back.

This is you again and you have a different shape.
This is you and you are even smaller.
This is you and you have a hunched posture.
This is you and your limbs twitch periodically.
This is you and you move without knowing what you are doing.
This is you and you are naked, and your skin hangs loosely from your body.

You begin to groom each other.
You begin to caress each other.

In your dark burrow, you marvel at each other's naked bodies.
You show each other your nails and you are both delighted.
You show each other your teeth and you are both delighted.
You show each other your nostrils and you are both delighted.
You catch a small animal with your bare hands, kill it and share it with each other.
Then you carefully observe each other's dung.

The figure says,
“I am the performer.
I am the creator of illusions.
You are the audience.
You will believe my creations.”

The performer points at the crack in the burrow and says,

“Look at the glowing light.
That could be an opening.
You could escape through that opening.”

“To fit through that opening, you have to give yourself a different shape.
Don't think that this is easy.
To escape you will have to forget your current shape.”

The performer asks you, “Will you be different?”
You answer, “Yes, I will.”

The performer says,

„Now, say to yourself:
I will accept within myself an earlier, ampler world. I will know the hills and rivers, the animals and their habitats, the plants and their uses. I will know what ancient spirits dwelled within unusual formations of rocks. I will take on all sorts of shapes. I will foretell the future and perform prodigies. I will become insensitive to pain.”

You hear the song of a bird.

The performer asks you,

“Do you hear the canary singing?”
“Yes”, you answer.

You feel a creature between your arms.

“Do you feel this wounded bird quite plainly?” the voice asks.
“Quite plainly”, you answer, as you stroke its back.

The performer says,

“Now you can open your eyes.”
“Do you see the bird?”

You open your eyes, and in your hands you hold a black cloth.

You look for any opportunity to escape.
Your brain acts like a sentry against sudden movement.
The performer grabs you. The performer puts the black cloth over your head.

The performer says,

“Did you know that if a frog is gently held between the fingers with a thumb on its abdomen, and the four fingers on its back, after two or three minutes the creature will become perfectly motionless. It can then be stretched out on its back or be put in the most fantastic positions, without attempting to resist or escape.”

Your body is deprived of all power of reaction. You remain rigid in your position, with a strange expression of fear on your face. You feel that you are slowly entering a different state.

Your head feels dull. Your thoughts grow more and more confused. You raise your right arm high in the air. It remains in the air and cannot be brought down despite all your effort.

The performer continues,

“You should be quite aware that you are playing an absurd part. It is clear that you are an impostor. It is not odd that you should laugh. You are a hideous thing hiding by way of a human shape. You exaggerate like a person pretending madness. Your astonished face gives you away. Your expression of pain, your smiles, the chattering of teeth and the shivering at different suggestions of pain, pleasure and cold are no easy task for you. You look rather ridiculous. Your musk wafting through the air also lacks all authenticity. You say you see something when you do not. You are a lump of soft wax, a comic mockery of the savage.”

“Let me ask you something”, the performer says,

“Have you ever been to Smogaria?”

“Have you ever seen a Smogarian?”
“What can you tell me about Smogaria?”
“What's the capital of Smogaria?”
“Do you speak Smogarian?”
“Do you read Smogarian?”
“Do you write Smogarian?”
“Do you know how many Smogarians there are in Smogaria?”

“Pay attention”, the performers says, “If you reach Smogaria, you will have to prove that you are a Smogarian. They will ask you many questions and you must be prepared to fool them.”

“You will have to be a performer.
You will have to create an illusion for your audience.
You will have to create the illusion of human skin.”

In the black hood covering your head you see a tiny tear and through it a speck of light.
You look carefully at the glowing light.
That could be an opening.
You could escape through that opening.
Will you fit through that opening?
It doesn't seem very large.

To fit through that opening, you have to give yourself a different shape.
Don't think that this is easy.
To escape you will have to forget your current shape.

You squint your eyes. Your eyes become moist and bright, your look is fixed, your pupils are dilated. A figure begins to reveal itself, as if pushing through a dense fog.

This is you once again and you have a different shape.
This is you and you are even smaller.
This is you and you have the posture of a sleeping caterpillar.
This is you and your limbs jerk violently without your consent.
This is you and you perform the action of walking while standing in one place.
This is you and you are naked, and you wear your skin like a toddler wearing adult pajamas.

Someone removes the black hood from your head and you are in a beautiful garden.

The figure with the sagging skin comes up to you.
Its features are drooping and undefined.
It hands you a knife.

“Where am I?” you ask.
“Is this Smogaria?”
“Are you a Smogarian?”

“We are your audience”, the figure answers.

And you accept this to be true.

“Who are you?” the audience asks.
You say, “I am a Smogarian.”

“How many Smogarians does it take to change a light bulb?” the audience asks.
You answer, “Three. One to hold the bulb and two to turn the ladder.”

And tears fall down your face.

“What do you call a Smogarian with half a brain?” they ask.
“Gifted”, you say.

And you begin to cut off the skin from your face.

“Who are you?” they ask.
You say, “I am a Smogarian.”

And you peel off the skin from your chest.

“What is the smallest building in Smogaria?” they ask.
“The Hall of Fame”, you answer.

“Who are you?” they ask again.
“I am a Smogarian”, you answer.

And on you go with your arms and legs.

“Why are Smogarian mothers so strong?” they ask.
“It comes from raising dumbbells”, you answer.

“Who are you?” they ask again.
“I am a Smogarian”, you answer.

And you lift your empty skin up in the air.

“What does it say on the bottom of Coke bottles in Smogaria?” they ask.
“Open the other end”, you answer.

“Who are you?” they ask again.
“I am a Smogarian”, you say.

And you pull out your heart and cut it into pieces.

“Why do Smogarians have scratched faces on Monday mornings?” they ask.
“Because they eat with knives and forks over the weekend”, you answer.

“Who are you?” they ask again.
“I am a Smogarian”, you answer.

And you burn the rest of your organs in a pyre.

“How do you make a Smogarian shish kebab?” they ask.
“Shoot an arrow into a garbage can”, you say.

“Who are you?” they ask again.
“I am a Smogarian”, you answer.

And you jump into the pyre.

“What do you call a Smogarian who practices birth control?” they ask.
“A Humanitarian”, you answer.

Then the audience asks, “Are you different?”

You say,

“I have eyes but I do not know what I see. I don't know what to call anything I look at. When I see rain, I don't know that it is water, much less that it cools, refreshes and feeds the earth, still less that plants and fruits would not grow without it. I don't know the proper objects of grief or joy, fear or anger, much less the meaning of them. Human life appears to me as insubstantial and artificial as a play.”

“Did you come up with that yourself?” they ask.

“Yes, these are my original thoughts“, you answer.

“Who are you?” they ask.

You say, „I am that which is, has been and shall be.
My veil no one has lifted.
The fruit I bore was the sun.“

“Wow”, they answer.
“That is the funniest thing we have ever heard.”

“You are truly an accomplished performer.”

You concentrate on the fire that is swallowing you.

You look carefully at the glowing light.
This could be an opening.
You could escape through this opening.

Will you fit through this opening?
It doesn't seem very large.

To fit through this opening, you have to give yourself a different shape.
Don't think that this is easy.
To escape you will have to forget your current shape.

You squint your eyes. Your eyes become moist and bright, your look is fixed, your pupils are dilated. A figure begins to reveal itself, as if pushing through a dense fog.

You recognize this figure.

On a stage, under a bright spotlight, you see an entire flayed skin flapping in the wind. You see it make all the motions of biting into an invisible fruit and then you see it wipe the imaginary sweat from its brow.

“Wow”, you say, ”What a convincing illusion.
That truly is an accomplished performer.”