

## **The Players**

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## *A note to the reader*

This text presents ten players, or characters, who originated from my work as a visual artist. Some are based on tv shows and games. Others arose from personal experiences. During my process, these characters developed into prominent voices in dialogue with physical material.

When I am thinking or talking about my characters, they always feel very sensible to me. But just like when you try to write down a dream, I noticed my characters wouldn't make much sense in writing. They would just result in very incoherent sentences. It made this writing piece a very exciting challenge to me. I had to convince myself that it was okay for the characters to change; to leave bits of story out and to add new things.

While writing about the characters the word players came up. It felt more suitable because it's a more active word than characters. Players suggest there is something to be played (maybe a video or game). They can be activated and aren't static in their surroundings. Whenever they play there will be new choices to make. Only the properties of the player, a set of rules on how they react, are fixed. If you read this writing piece, it might sound as if I am contradicting myself, since some players have a very strict fate lying before them. But even if their fate is inescapable, they have moves to make.

The Players are all of a very different nature and might not seem connected at first sight. Still a couple of them are connected by being the contrary or by complementing another. Some players are written in a more classic way of storytelling, others are less conventional and more experimental. Others contain little riddles.

In the end I can't prepare you fully for what it is that I've written, but these are all honest and real players that made decisions in how they came to appear on paper. I hope they'll find you well.

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## Counter

- decides what counts and what doesn't count
- has a desk job
- has an empty calendar
- it's extended horns and canines are a moon cycle (zonder schijn)
- doesn't count in theory, but in practice
- defines existing entities

## Bobin

Bobin is a pirate who works for Big Mom, the captain. Big Mom and her pirate crew are also chess pieces. She is the queen, and Bobin is the bishop.

Bobin is an atypical bishop—they are a double-edged bishop. As described in the *Secret Life of Bad Bishops*, a double-edged bishop is defined as “a bishop that cannot yet be declared good or bad, but rather holds the potential of becoming good as well as the risk of becoming bad.”<sup>1</sup>

And thus Bobin’s fate is set in just two possibilities, good or bad. These possibilities are expressed by the mouth of Bobin, which steadily grows and never stops growing, either as a smile or its opposite—a smile turned upside down that one would describe as sad or mad. As Bobin’s mouth grows, the bad or good nature of Bobin becomes known.

Not seeing one’s fate can be a way of mastering it—maybe even changing it for all we know. But Bobin’s mouth, and therefore also their fate, are “uncage-able.” Eventually their mouth exceeds any cover, because their mouth never stops growing. Their fate is inescapable.

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<sup>1</sup> Esben Lund 2014, p. 9

## *Sports player*

### Kite (before)

Kite was a kite called Chula, who fought with another kite called Pakpao.

The Chula kite (male/snake) and the Pakpao kite (female/weasel) have been eternal rivals.

Chula kept fighting Pakpao and ended up broken in many pieces.

Pakpao tried to put him back together so they could fight again, but she failed to restore him.

## Cutty Flam / Cyborg Franky

Cutty Flam lived on an Island that was famous for its shipwrights and technicians. The most genius shipwright of all was Tom, the foster parent of Cutty Flam. Because Tom was so skilled, all the pirates wanted their ship to be one of his.

For most of Tom's pirate ships the government would close an eye, but when the greatest crime in history was committed on a ship made by Tom, he got sentenced to death by the government.

However, the government didn't immediately kill him, because he was also building a train that would cross the sea. This train was so important that they postponed his death sentence until the train would be finished.

As soon as the first day the train was running, the government used it to take Tom to the place of his execution. Cutty Flam was devastated and he tried to stop the train in which his uncle was being taken away. Desperately he stood on the rails with his hand in the air facing the departing train. He didn't move an inch and the train hit him fully frontally. Everyone thought that he had died that day.

Having learned from the best, Cutty Flam had become just as good a technician as Tom. And thus he managed to save himself by replacing the full front of his body, which got pulverised by the train, with mechanics. Only half of what had been Cutty Flam was left, so he felt the need for a new name that also includes his mechanical side. And so, he lived on as Cyborg Franky.

Not only is Cyborg Franky half mechanics, he also considers himself partly (a non-human) animal. Half of his frontal legs can be extended forward, resulting in four legs and two arms. He calls this the *reversed centaur mode*.

Cyborg Franky is now a pirate that is sailing in the name of all Animals, Machines and Humans. This is symbolised on his pirate flag, which is the image of a leg without a body that ends in a hoof with a horseshoe. The long hair on the leg is cut in the latest fashion of human haircuts.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Most part of this story is my summary of the Manga One Piece Volume 37, by Eiichiro Ode, 2005.

## *Transforming player*

Kite (before: he / after: she)

Kite is a difficult one to explain.

An innumerable amount of factors have had an influence on him to make her the way she will be.

No one could know an innumerable amount, so even Kite would not be able to explain to you, fully, how she will come to be.

What I can tell you now are the factors and influences that I know of, but be warned: It will be a bit messy, because I only know some small pieces.

1. Kite had a strange weapon with many abilities.
2. Kite sacrificed his arm to save someone else from Pitou, an ant-soldier. He kept fighting Pitou and ended up broken in many pieces.
3. Pitou tried to put him back together so they could fight again, but she failed to restore him.
4. The ant queen ate a girl.
5. Kite will be born again as part of a twin and as an ant baby. Her mother is the ant queen.
6. Kite will have the body and mind of the eaten girl.
7. Kite will grow up without a parent, because her mother dies when giving birth.
8. Kite remembered most of his life and Kite will imagine most of her life.



## Maria (any)

Maria is a player that can be found through the collective eye. Many people know of Maria, even though they have not seen Maria with their own eyes. By collecting representations of Maria one may find who Maria really is, for anything can be approached if you have enough data.

### Popularity of the name Maria in the Netherlands<sup>3</sup>

<i>man</i>	<i>NL total (2014)</i>
As first name:	641
As follow name:	480.981

<i>woman</i>	
As first name:	333.861
As follow name:	1.111.220

I will tell you about one of the representations of Maria.

Maria was born a little dalmatian. The little dalmatian got the task to protect the money of its owner. For years it was silently sitting on a pile of coins. Even so silently that at some point the owner forgot its existence. Without anyone noticing the small body of the dalmatian turned into a hollow stone figure surrounding the coins.

The owner was a girl called Maria and she got the little dalmatian from her nanny when she was nine. When she turned eighteen she moved out of her parents home and started cleaning out her room. While going through her stuff she found the little dalmatian and realised it had been watching her coins all these years.

She felt so honored and protected by the Dalmatian that she wanted to give it something in return. And so, she decided to give her name to the stone Dalmatian. She also packed the Dalmatian, now called Maria, in fabrics, hugged Maria and put Maria on a chair on the wall. This chair was hanging so high, that Maria could watch over all the things in the room. Then she wrote a little prayer and pasted it on the tip of Maria's head, as it was the only part not covered in cloth.

The prayer asked if Maria could help her think.

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<sup>3</sup> Voornamenbank, <https://www.meertens.knaw.nl/nvb/naam/is/maria>

Since then the girl lived on without a name, knowing she would not need it, for Maria would give her purpose and guidance.

## The Pilgrim (non)

Pilgrims are in search of their bodies  
Pilgrims are in search of their minds  
Pilgrims search for them in their surroundings  
They are moving

The Pilgrim is one of many pilgrims  
The Pilgrim is any pilgrim

The Pilgrim would travel on a saddle  
And when the carrier is lost by foot  
But the Pilgrim was a hanger  
And so the Pilgrim was hanged

## The Swimming Creature

The swimming creature is allergic to water, so it can only swim everywhere else. In the air it travels with a smooth breaststroke. Easily it moves in the right direction, as if the wind is always blowing in favor of the swimming creature. And not just air is swimmable for the creature. It can swim in the earth as well and even in stone, trees, buildings and streets you can find it moving. Only when it reaches a pool, a river, an ocean or even a puddle its swimming starts to stagnate. The Swimming Creature might want to cry at those moments, being stuck in everything else that is not water. But you would never see it cry, because even its own tears would damage the creature.

In these sad moments the swimming creature is a doubtful creature, always stumbling on the same question it's not able to answer: Can I really be the swimming creature if I can't swim in water? Is it not just flying or dancing what I do?

## The Feet Mayor

The Feet Mayor came to exist because of a disaster. A disaster that started with a Powerset Person and a Feet Forest.

*Powerset Persons are persons that can grow feet on themselves when they sleep. When they are not sleeping they like to put on shoes. Sometimes even all of their feet have a shoe but most of the time some have and some don't. Powerset Persons like to wear a different set of shoes every day, so they are always in need of more shoes. That is why they often form pacts with Feet Forests, which are forests of feet that grow shoes. The pact is not just in favor of the Powerset Person; to keep themselves clean, Feet Forests like to have a Powerset Person to collect their finished shoes.*

The disaster that resulted in the Feet Mayor began with a somewhat remarkable contract between a Powerset Person and a Feet Forest. The contract was written as precisely as possible so that it could only be interpreted in one way. They made sure there would be no room for misunderstandings. This very clear contract now binds them to each other, but the strictness of it, is probably what made the disaster.

In the contract the Powerset Person of the Feet Forest called  $P(F)$ , is the set of all the subsets of the Feet forest, including the empty set  $\{\}$  and the whole Feet Forest itself. Thus the definition follows:

$$P(F) = \{ S \mid S \subseteq F \}^4$$

For which P is the Powerset Person, S a set of Shoes and F the Feet Forest.

So even if the Feet forest doesn't contain any shoes, it can't escape the power of the Powerset Person, because the empty set is also part of the Powerset Person.

At the starting point the Feet Forest has finished three shoes: a blue slipper (bs), a right boot (rb) and a left boot (lb), and so  $F = \{bs, rb, lb\}$ .

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<sup>4</sup>	<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Definition</i>
	{...}	Set	A collection of elements
	$A \subseteq B$	Subset	A is a subset of B
		Vertical bar	Such that
	A	Cardinality	The number of elements of set A

Therefore the following sets are all to take for the Powerset Person:

$\{\}, \{bs\}, \{rb\}, \{lb\}, \{bs, rb\}, \{bs, lb\}, \{lb, rb\}, \{bs, lb, rb\}$

Now a shoe (s) of the Feet Forest can either be in a set of shoes or not be in a set of shoes. This gives every shoe two possibilities for every set of shoes. Thus the amount of sets that can be made with two shoes is two times two. The amount of sets that can be made with three shoes is  $2 \times 2 \times 2$  etc.

Thus for the amount of sets in  $P(F)$  applies the following:

$$|P(F)| = 2^s$$

At the starting point there are three shoes and therefore eight sets:

$$|P(F)| = 2^3 = 8$$

So the Powerset Person can wear a different set of shoes for eight days. When the Powerset Person doesn't have any new sets to wear it will go to sleep for half the days it was able to wear the different sets. The Powerset Person will make two new feet per day in this period. After the sleeping period the Powerset Person will go to the Feet forest to collect its new shoes. This should be exactly the same amount of shoes as the Powerset Person has feet.

Then the Powerset Person will again wear a different set of shoes every day and when there are no new sets to wear anymore, it will sleep again for half the days it had different sets and grow two new feet a day and so on.

Shoes (s)	Sets ( $ P(F) $ )	Days
3	8	12
4	16	24
5	34	50
6	68	102
...	...	...
102	5.070.602.400.912.917.605. 986.812.821.504	7.605.903.601.369.376.408 .980.219.232.256

Now that you know of the unbreakable bond between the shoes, the Feet Forest and the power set person, I can tell you about the disaster that resulted in the Feet Mayor.

For years the Powerset Person and Feet Forest were both very happy. But then something arrived at the Feet Forest and started cutting it. This became a big

problem, because the shoes that are grown in the Feet Forest started to go down in numbers. As soon as the Powerset Person would wake up from its sleep, it would come to the Feet Forest to collect its shoes. But the Feet Forest might not have enough shoes and thereby, it would break the contract.

All the Feet Trees in the Feet Forest began to worry when they heard the rumor that something was cutting them down. And from their worries the Feet Mayor was born. The Feet Mayor immediately started investigating the Feet Forest and found the force that was cutting the Feet Trees. The mayor tried to explain the situation to the force and asked it to leave, but the force said no and stayed. Every day more Feet Trees with unfinished shoes would be cut down by the force and every day the Feet Mayor would ask the force to leave. There were only a few days left before the Powerset Person would come by to collect its shoes and the Feet Mayor needed to find at least a temporary solution.

The Feet Mayor resorted to help from outside of the Feet Forrest, to try and compensate for the lack of shoes. And so the mayor spread the following pamphlet.

*Pamphlet 1/1*

*The Feet Mayor is searching for SHOES*

*- Any kind is welkom (Imaginary shoes, complex shoes ( $a + bi$ ), digital shoes, real shoes, integer shoes, half a shoe etc.)*

*- Any size is welkom (JP/MX/US.. sizes, 41, 8, 1, 1000000000, 4783209178758490758230, sizes that are non-existing, sizes no one knows, really small sizes, 0,00000..., micro-size, macro-size, changing sizes, converging sizes etc.)*

*- Any kind of material is welkom (leather shoes, plastic heels, a glass slipper, stone shoe, crayon boots etc.)*

*The Feet Mayor is in distress and needs your help. The Feet Forest is short on shoes and the Powerset Person is around the corner. We don't want to know what happens when the Feet Mayor won't get enough shoes in time. For sure, the Powerset Person won't be happy.*

*Please help the Feet Forest and bring in all the shoes you can miss to the Feet Mayor.*

## Doll

Doll was found by a scientist. The scientist saw her laying on the street and recognised by instinct that Doll was an alien, someone that had come to exist somewhere outside of the earth. The scientist brought Doll home and decided to research her, because she wanted to know what Doll was doing on earth. First the scientist needed to decode the language of Doll. Which was nothing like any language on earth. After a long time of trials and errors the scientist eventually realised she wouldn't be able to translate any of Doll's language in earthly words or the other way around. Their ways of communication were just too different.

The scientist had to find a new way to get closer to understanding Doll and so the scientist decided to analyse her behavior. She set Doll free on the streets and was ready to take note of all the details of Doll's behavior, but even after she had been staring at Doll for days, there was nothing to note at all. Doll wasn't doing anything, or at least not in any way visible through simple observation.

That got the scientist in doubt for some time. What was she supposed to do with Doll, she thought. She didn't just want to leave Doll on the streets, so she decided to take Doll into her home and she put her on a chair in the living room. Everyday they passed each other without any interaction. Often when passing, the mind of the scientist slipped into thoughts about Doll. What was Doll still doing on that chair? Doesn't she need to go somewhere? What is she thinking? On other days she had more worrying thoughts. Could she be sick or is she just feeling cold? Does she need help with anything? Or is she feeling lonely?

The scientist felt the need to do something and decided to give Doll a bath and some clothes. From that moment Doll gradually became more and more involved with the life of the Scientist. They started watching tv together and taking walks through the park. And very slightly, without anyone really noticing, Doll seemed to take on the form of a human, to such a degree that eventually no scientist would recognise her as an alien.



## Rayman

Whenever you turn to Rayman he will be there for you. Rayman lives in a world of eternity that you may visit any time. When you are alone you can contact Rayman and he will lend you his body and home.

Rayman lives in a green oasis together with his friends. They like to chill and not do too much. They are simple beings, happy with what they've got, never greedy for more. Nevertheless, when danger arises, they will face it with some healthy reluctance. Rayman will make the best out of any situation by putting on some disco music and gliding on his disco themed board. In between the moments of danger and duty you will find Rayman and his friends looking for ways to have some fun, because in the end, they just want to enjoy eachothers company, party and dance.

Rayman has a head, two hands, a torso and two feet. Its feet are on the ground and the rest of its body floats in the air. One may wonder if the rest of its limbs are just invisible, because all the parts of Rayman seem to be floating in the right place; when one limb moves, the rest of them follow, as if linked to each other. But when rayman starts to dance, his limbs extend the boundaries of any normal body. You will see the parts dancing by themselves.

Many mortals have envied Rayman for his body and for his life in the green oasis. Some of them didn't want to leave Raymans body and stayed for the rest of their lives. But for those who didn't leave, time would gradually become something ungraspable and pass as if it wasn't there. And when their original body started dying, they were forced to come back to it and leave the body of Rayman. Some felt lucky to have lived in the world of Rayman, though they must have mourned to die alone without their friends from the green oasis. Others came to realise that they had neglected their own bodies and that there was nothing left of their previous lives. In the end they regretted that they did not return earlier.

There have been yet other mortals that tried to copy Rayman to their own world, but they would always soon realise that they were partying alone, with nobody to relate to.

## Butterfly Boy

When Butterfly Boy was born nobody knew who the child's parents were or where the child came from. They didn't know if the child was a boy or a girl or what kind of species the child was. Some said the child's face had the shape of a whale's tail, others compared it to the wings of a butterfly with a cat-like snout. And thus the child was called many things at first. Eventually though, the common term for the child became Butterfly Boy.

When Butterfly Boy got older, he learned how to communicate with other children and began to realise he was different from them. The other children all had parents. They learned what to behave like and what their possibilities would be in the future. Butterfly Boy had no idea what his future would be like, because there was nobody around who could know. What would he look like and what was he supposed to do?

When Butterfly Boy learned about the zoo and all the different kinds of species that are collected there, he got very excited and decided to go take a look for himself. In the zoo he compared himself to every animal and imagined himself growing into one of them. He made a short list of animals he really liked. Now he just needed to choose what he would want to be and learn how to cocoon.