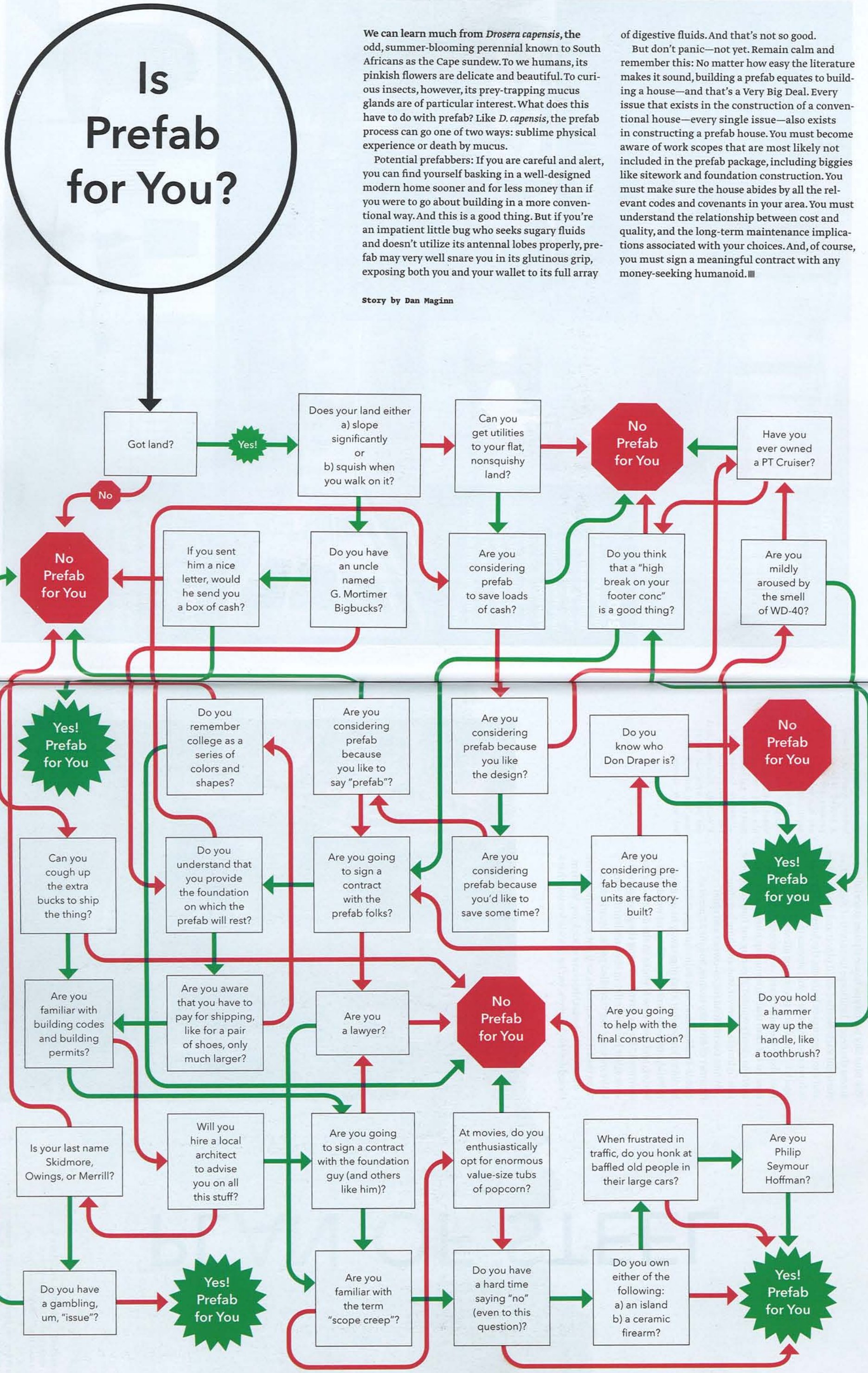
Is Prefab for You?

We can learn much from *Drosera capensis*, the odd, summer-blooming perennial known to South Africans as the Cape sundew. To we humans, its pinkish flowers are delicate and beautiful. To curious insects, however, its prey-trapping mucus glands are of particular interest. What does this have to do with prefab? Like *D. capensis*, the prefab process can go one of two ways: sublime physical experience or death by mucus.

Potential prefabbers: If you are careful and alert, you can find yourself basking in a well-designed modern home sooner and for less money than if you were to go about building in a more conventional way. And this is a good thing. But if you're an impatient little bug who seeks sugary fluids and doesn't utilize its antennal lobes properly, prefab may very well snare you in its glutinous grip, exposing both you and your wallet to its full array of digestive fluids. And that's not so good.

But don't panic—not yet. Remain calm and remember this: No matter how easy the literature makes it sound, building a prefab equates to building a house—and that's a Very Big Deal. Every issue that exists in the construction of a conventional house—every single issue—also exists in constructing a prefab house. You must become aware of work scopes that are most likely not included in the prefab package, including biggies like sitework and foundation construction. You must make sure the house abides by all the relevant codes and covenants in your area. You must understand the relationship between cost and quality, and the long-term maintenance implications associated with your choices. And, of course, you must sign a meaningful contract with any money-seeking humanoid.

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