

BUT HAVE YOU TRIED CRYSTALS?

by

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Cast of Characters:

Lynette: Mid to late 40s, stay-at-home mother, Lululemon Texan, collector of crystals.

Gheree: Late 30s, name is pronounced “Geri,” but any time there is an asterisk in the script, it is mispronounced as “Gary;” insecure, has an oil for any occasion, new to the self-care game.

Bee: Late 30s to early 40s, gregarious, outspoken, granola bookstore owner, obsessed with bees.

Erin: Any age, scrappy, weathered from real life, obviously in a different economic bracket from the others, a person of color.

Emeline Plantagenet*: 40s to 50s, the Jesus of the self-care movement, white, pristine, wealthy.

Scene:

A hotel room.

Time:

Summer of 2020.

*Note: Pronounced with a strong French accent always. (In IPA: plɑ̃-ta-ʒə-ne)

(Lights come up on a hotel room. There are two single beds with nightstands. A door stands upstage center which leads into the bathroom and another on the stage right wall which leads out of the room. There is a coffee table with two armchairs and a mini bar against the wall. LYNETTE is seated on the floor, meditating on a yoga mat with her eyes closed. Nature sounds {thunder and rain, crickets, windchimes, etc.} play from her phone which is next to her. After a few moments, the door to the room slowly opens, and GHEREE enters tentatively. She is wearing a nametag and carries a convention swag bag. She gently closes the door behind her and makes her way over to her bed. Once seated, she pulls out her phone and texts frantically, looking worried. Suddenly the nature sounds have the addition of a loud crow, cawing over and over again. A chorus of other birds join in and it turns into a cacophony of loud-ass birds. GHEREE pauses and stares at LYNETTE. This goes on for a long beat. Without opening her eyes, LYNETTE reaches over and skips to the next track. A Native American flute track plays.)

LYNETTE

(eyes still closed) Do you ever wonder what your spirit animal is?

GHEREE

(startled) Oh! Um...not really. I took the official Pottermore quiz and my Patronus was an Elephant Seal. Does that count?

LYNETTE

My spirit animal is a butterfly. Everywhere I go, I see them. I recently got in a fender-bender and as I was getting out of the car to apologize to the pedestrian I hit, a butterfly landed on my windshield. She was letting me know that it was okay, I truly believe that. It is so easy for us to beat ourselves up when we make a mistake, but the universe sent that little beauty down as a way to say, "Lynette, everything happens for a reason. Choose compassion. Choose love." She has our back.

GHEREE

She?

LYNETTE

(opening her eyes, turning off the nature sounds) The universe.

GHEREE

I didn't realize that it had a gender.

LYNETTE

I know it's not chic to assume gender these days, but she must be a woman. She birthed the Earth! *(Still seated, she reaches into her yoga pants and begins fishing around. GHEREE stares.)* Every tree, every ocean, every mountain peak... She just *(pulls out a yoni egg)* popped it all out of her celestial womb. *(GHEREE stares.)* Isn't that the most beautiful idea?

(LYNETTE takes her yoni egg into the bathroom. She shuts the door and we hear water running. GHEREE snaps herself out of it, pulls a large briefcase from under the bed and places it next to her on the bed as LYNETTE returns and kneels down to roll up her yoga mat.)

GHEREE

I'm...I'm sorry. I just...um...did you just lay an egg?

LYNETTE

(laughing) Gheree!!*

GHEREE

It's Gheree.

LYNETTE

Oh, shit. I think I've been calling you Gheree* since we got here.

GHEREE

Yeah.

LYNETTE

I'm never going to remember it's Gheree. That spelling is too much. It's a yoni egg. *(GHEREE is lost.)* A jade egg? You insert it into your blossom.

GHEREE

Oh...

LYNETTE

Gwyneth says that once inserted, you fully harness the power of the jade. It can renew your womb in a few days.

GHEREE

Gwyneth?

LYNETTE

(sitting on her bed) Paltrow? Her revolutionary products are leading the way in self-care. Honestly, Gheree*, it sounds like you don't know anything about vaginal power.

GHEREE

I'm new to the Eastern medicine movement.

LYNETTE

Well, you roomed with the right gal, that is for sure. An egg a day keeps the leaking at bay! It's next to the sink. Don't get it mixed up with the fancy hand soap.

GHEREE

Where did you get your egg?

LYNETTE

KegelKingdom.com. On sale for \$70!

GHEREE

Wow. That's...

LYNETTE

So affordable, I know. They are really working on making it more accessible for all women. What are you going to wear to dinner?

GHEREE

This. *(LYNETTE looks her up and down and gives a pitying smile.)* This...set of earrings, I mean. They're handmade by orphans in Africa.

LYNETTE

Good for you. Every penny helps them build schools and buy Brita filters to clean the elephant shit from their rivers. I think I am going to go with something breezy. *(She pulls her suitcase onto her bed and begins to examine her clothing options.)* Don't you just feel restored from today's sessions? This conference is blowing my mind.

GHEREE

Truthfully, I'm a little overwhelmed. I had to re-apply my Lavender oil like, six times. My heart was racing all afternoon.

(She opens her briefcase to reveal an alarming number of oils, easily thousands of dollars worth. As she talks, she sorts through them and rubs various ones on different parts of her body.)

I saved up for three months to attend this conference. My mom thought I was crazy. I maxed out two credit cards, but this is *self-care*. I've been through a lot in the last few months. I deserve to take some time for myself and get away for a weekend; focus on my mental and emotional health. Older generations just don't understand. No offense. They think the most important thing in life is working a nine to five that they hate just so they can provide for their families. There is more to life than that! What about actually doing something that brings you *joy*?

LYNETTE

Mhmm.

GHEREE

You can't put a price tag on bettering yourself. \$2,200 for one weekend of self-improvement is nothing if it leads to finding your life's purpose. We deserve to feel good *now*. Happiness *now*. It's possible. I can do this. I am not a failure.

LYNETTE

What do you think of this? *(She holds up a white outfit)*

GHEREE

It's beautiful.

LYNETTE

It's designer. I begged Mike for it.

GHEREE

Your husband?

LYNETTE

Oh, yes! I'm sorry, I'm just so used to our town where everyone knows Mike. He's a bit of a local legend.

GHEREE

For what?

LYNETTE

He was captain of the football team in high school. Led the Trojans to an incredible state championship. *(Beat as GHEREE waits for more.)* He's also a surgeon. And so funny. Everyone always loves his jokes. "More Mike jokes!" they say. All the time.

GHEREE

Oh.

(LYNETTE stands there awkwardly for a moment and then retreats to the bathroom to change into her dinner outfit. GHEREE checks her cell phone. No reply to her earlier text. She anxiously applies more oil, then digs in her suitcase for an outfit. She pulls out, and tries to compare, three different white shirts that all kind of look the same.)

LYNETTE

(from the bathroom) I don't see a ring on your finger?

GHEREE

I'm single. Just went through a breakup, actually. That's what sparked this whole self-care thing.

LYNETTE

What did you do?

GHEREE

What do you mean?

LYNETTE

Why did he break up with you?

GHEREE

Uh...he didn't.. I broke up with him.

LYNETTE

Why?!

GHEREE

I don't know if I want to get into that right now...

LYNETTE

(emerging from the bathroom) You can dish, honey! I am always ready to receive the latest tea. Isn't that what people are saying? "Give me the tea?" The hot gossip?

GHEREE

I really wouldn't know...

LYNETTE

Come on now!

GHEREE

No, I...

LYNETTE

(cheering and clapping) Tea time! Tea time!

GHEREE

No, I don't...

(A knock at the door. LYNETTE goes to answer it as GHEREE breathes a sigh of relief. She uses the opportunity to dash into the bathroom to put on one of the white blouses.)

LYNETTE

(opening the door) There she is!

(BEE enters the room, hugging LYNETTE. She is wild and free, dressed in a floor-length skirt and a white bohemian top. She carries a large tote bag that has bees all over it.)

BEE

We missed you in the afternoon session!

LYNETTE

I knooooow. I have always wanted to learn how to read my pet's aura, but I had a private Reiki session.

BEE

Ooooh, I bet that was divine. *(calling into the hall)* Erin?

LYNETTE

Who?

BEE

My roommate, Erin. I invited her to dinner.

(ERIN begrudgingly drags herself into the room. She wears a black t-shirt with a red-flannel button up over it, ill-fitting jeans, and old sneakers. She is floored by the smells of the many oils GHEREE has put on.)

ERIN

(covering her mouth) What the fuck is that?!

BEE

Essential oils. The elixir of wellness. You'll get used to it.

(GHEREE timidly emerges from the bathroom.)

GHEREE

It's my fault. I overdid it on the Blue Tansy.

ERIN

I didn't mean any offense. It's just...wow. That is...a lot.

LYNETTE

Intros! Bee, this is my roommate, Gheree*. She's from Utah.

GHEREE

It's Gheree, actually.

BEE

Right on, right on. You a Mormon?

GHEREE

No. Not anymore.

LYNETTE

Are those the people in buggies?

BEE

That's Amish. Mormons are the no-coffee ones with ten wives.

ERIN

I would never be able to get through the day without my cup of Folgers.

LYNETTE

(laughs) Folgers! That is so quaint. *(to Erin)* I'm Lynette. From Texas. Just one spouse for me, haha!

GHEREE

And Bee? As in Beatrice?

BEE

As in Bumble. I legally changed my name to Bumblebee Sanders.

GHEREE

Wow.

LYNETTE

And Erin? I'm getting a real Midwest vibe from you.

ERIN

Akron, Ohio.

LYNETTE

Ohio. Such a mystery to me. What do you have there?

ERIN

Um...mainly just like...cities and stuff. Farms?

LYNETTE

I die for a farm! Can you imagine waking up every morning to the sound of roosters, drinking your Macchiato on the wrap-around porch, and watching the sun rise? *(to Erin)* A Macchiato is a shot of espresso topped with foamed milk. A little different from Folgers. That's why I laughed before.

ERIN

Ah.

LYNETTE

Well, our dinner reservation isn't until 7:30, so we have a bit of time. I think we should do...SHOTS! *(She runs over to the mini-fridge and grabs four mini bottles.)* B12 for everyone! I just need to run to the conference check-in table to get some syringes.

GHEREE

We're going to give each other shots of B12? Is that safe?

LYNETTE

Y'all need to get on the party bus. B12 has been directly linked to increased energy and brain function.

ERIN

(lowly) Then we're going to need a lot of syringes.

BEE

I need to get my system ready to receive it. Do you mind if I make a bowel movement in your bathroom?

LYNETTE

Of course! Help yourself. BRB, y'all!

(She trots joyfully from the room. ERIN tries to give GHEREE a look of shock, but GHEREE is frantically texting again. ERIN awkwardly takes a seat at the coffee table. GHEREE sighs with frustration.)

ERIN

Everything okay?

GHEREE

Oh, yeah. I just am having a...hard day.

ERIN

(chuckles) Me, too. I don't really get the vibe of all of this.

GHEREE

(in a low voice) Honestly, I'm not sure I do either.

ERIN

Really?

GHEREE

Well, I don't know. I mean, don't repeat that. I just...feel lost. My life had been on a pretty normal track until this year, and now it's all...a mess. And desperate times call for blah blah blah. You know. Oh, God. I'm sorry. I don't even know you. I don't mean to unload all of this.

ERIN

No, it's fine. I feel like this is the only authentic thing I've heard all day.

GHEREE

Oh, I wouldn't say that. There's a lot of power in the things that we may not fully understand.

ERIN

Whatever helps you, I guess.

GHEREE

I mean, it hasn't yet. The deeper I've gone into these ideas, the more confusing it all becomes. But, there's only one way to go once you've hit the bottom, I guess.

ERIN

I'm sorry.

GHEREE

Ugh. Enough about me. So embarrassing.

ERIN

What could be more embarrassing than announcing that you're going to take a shit in someone else's room?

(BEE opens the door dramatically.)

BEE

Done!

GHEREE

(to ERIN) That.

(BEE makes her way to the other chair at the coffee table.)

BEE

Don't tell Lynette, but I think I washed my hands with her jade egg instead of real soap.

GHEREE

(to ERIN) And that. So, um...where are you from, Bee?

BEE

Eugene, Oregon. I own a bookstore there. The Literary Labia. Just celebrated our 10 years.

GHEREE

Congratulations!

BEE

It's been a hell of a ride. Business ownership is not for pussies. Until it is! We have the biggest selection of coffee table books on labia photography in the nation.

ERIN

Is that something that's in high demand?

BEE

You tell me. It paid for the last four years of this conference. *(Pulls a badge from her pocket)* VIP status.

GHEREE

VIP?! Does that mean you get to meet...

BEE

That's right.

GHEREE

Oh my God.

ERIN

Sorry, who are we talking about?

BEE

Are you sure you're at the right convention? (*flips her badge over to read the convention title*)
"Tough Titty Cuntvention: Empowering Women to Unleash the Power of Yes and Right Now." I mean, can you even believe this title?

ERIN

No. I can't really believe anything that is happening here. I passed a vaginal steaming booth on my way to the bar. And when I got to the bar I found out that it wasn't really a bar, but a nude barre class. As in ballet. Nude. I...don't know why. And everything is so expensive.

BEE

You can't put a price tag on taking care of yourself.

ERIN

Well...

BEE

I take it that this is your first convention.

ERIN

And last. I'm just here on behalf of my sister. I don't...

GHEREE

Bee. You were saying. VIP...

BEE

Oh, yes! VIP. I get to be a part of a luncheon with her tomorrow afternoon.

GHEREE

Damn it. I wanted to go so badly. It was what, an extra \$2,000?

ERIN

God!

BEE

60 uninterrupted minutes with her, eating some of the finest kale steaks in the world. There is no amount of money I wouldn't pay for that experience.

GHEREE

I know, I know. I've just maxed out two credit cards already...

BEE

We all have to make the best choice for us. No judgment. Does anyone want some chia seeds?

(GHEREE nods eagerly and sits on the edge of LYNETTE's bed to be closer to them. She takes a palm-full of seeds that BEE produces from a baggie in her tote.)

ERIN

Is that filling?

BEE

Not at all, but look at my skin. Would you guess that I'm 39?

ERIN

Yes?

(Awkward silence. GHEREE and BEE munch their seeds.)

So...lunch with who?

BEE

My mind these days! Too much pot. We're talking about Emeline Plantagenet.

(Blank stare from ERIN. GHEREE's phone dings and she scrambles to read the text and responds to the text all throughout the next bit.)

Emeline Plantagenet! The leader of the self-care movement? The founder of Plantagenetics, the completely plant-based revolution? The savior we have been waiting for?!

ERIN

The lady on all of the posters?

BEE

(sighs) Yes.

ERIN

And what has she done, exactly?

BEE

Shit. I mean, where do you even start? *(She stands and paces the room.)*

ERIN

I didn't mean to stress you out...

BEE

You didn't, I'm just about to monologue.

(She pauses to take a cleansing breath as ERIN looks to GHEREE for answers. GHEREE shrugs.)

When I was 14, I lived on my aunt and uncle's farm in Oregon. My reality was knowing the name of every cow in the pasture, wading in the stream on hot afternoons, eating apples straight off of the tree. I would read for hours in a treehouse that my uncle made for me, overlooking the hundreds of acres that stretched into the horizon. I thought, this is happiness. This is the childhood everyone wishes they had.

That was the summer I started beekeeping. I was never afraid that they would sting me. I would watch them for hours, coming in and out of their hive, the weight of the world on their shoulders. If they decided not to work anymore, our ecosystem would collapse. It's been said that mankind would only survive four years if all of the bees died. These tiny miracles hold our future and don't even have the brain power to know it.

On one of my afternoons with the bees, I was raped by the farmhand. Pinned down on the grass, I told myself, "Just look at the bees." They were free on the breeze, coming and going. "Bees on the breeze. Bees on the breeze. Be as free as a bee on a breeze" I thought, over and over. I imagined myself as the Queen Bee, wearing a tiny crown of honeycomb, riding the wind. I wished that I could lead a bee battalion against him. But bees don't sting to attack; they sting to protect. Their honey. Their home. Everything they were born to do. They sacrifice themselves to keep their collective life's purpose whole. So I didn't fight. I laid there and took a lesson from the bees about sacrifice. My sting was my silence, and a part of me did die.

I ran away from the farm and bounced between friends' homes for the rest of my adolescence, but to me the most devastating part of it all was that I had developed a deep fear of bees. I'd developed a kind of PTSBee. Then, in my mid-twenties, I stumbled across a TedTalk by Emeline Pantagenet. She was lecturing on an ancient treatment called apitherapy in which bees sting a willing patient to assist in the reduction of depression and inflammation. She said that it had

changed her life and in that moment I felt the Universe whispering in my ear. I flew to LA and had an apitherapy session with her. Those bees gave their lives so that I might once again be whole. \$10,000 later I had a renewed spirit and a new friend. Emeline healed me and allowed me to manifest my true self-- Bumblebee Sanders.