

CHAPTER ONE OF PISCES

IN WHICH

*Pisces is disgusted,
Scorpio patronizes,
and Cancer matronizes*

How admirable!

Dirt floors. Wooden decor. They've even added moss between the planking: The spiritual considerations taken in the building of this masterpiece are truly overwhelming!

I feel a prick in my left eye.

And I might cry. But no. I can't cry. Crying destabilizes the qi. Don't fall to pieces, Pisces!

I close it.

I repeat my Anti-Cry Mantra:

INSCRUTABLE

PHARMACEUTICAL

CUTICLE

It works. I don't cry.

"I love the walls," Scorpio says, running her hands along the bare, wooden planking—how wonderful!

"Tsk, tsk, honey. Don't get splinters now," Cancer says.

Scorpio stops and sucks her fingers suggestively.

"Excuse me?" I say, "Do either of you feel what's happening here?"

Scorpio releases her fingers with a pop.

"Enlighten us, Pisces," she says.

"True spirit-to-earth plane unification," I say, "Just look at this place. Dirt floors. No doors. My chakras haven't felt this aligned with benevolent energy since we volunteered at that basket-making farm in Cancun."

I breathe it in.

Then, just to be safe, I close my right eye and recite my Reserve Anti-Cry Mantra:

OPULESCENT

EVANESCENT

PRE-PUBESCENT

It works. I still don't cry.

Scorpio goes to an open square (the window, so brave) and lights a cigarette.

"You do know where we are, Pisces? Don't you?"

“I do, Scorpio! But the real question is: how to achieve this same level of transcendency in my tiny home retreat?”

She exhales like a manikin chimney.

“These are the old slave quarters, Pisces.”

“What?”

“This is not a tiny home.”

“What do you mean?”

“Don't be an idiot, Pisces. Why would this be a tiny home? This is a museum. Look. There's even a plaque on the wall.”

“A what?”

I look around.

Oh Zod. Oh no. Dirt floors. No doors...

“But this is disgusting.”

I feel the prick in my left eye.

But I won't cry. I don't cry. I refuse. But then Scorpio lights another cigarette and oh! Her rag thin dress! Her dirty choices! The disgustingness of the sight is too much!

I sob!

“Darling!” Cancer crosses the dirt (the floor, supposedly) to hug me, “It's alright!”

“No, Cancer! It is not alright! Look at this place. How could anyone leave something in such disgusting conditions! I haven't felt this oppressed by negative energy since we rented that Airbnb in Miami, remember? Quick! Who brought thier sage?”

“No one.”

“Crystals?”

“No one.”

“Damn it!”

I kick the wood (the wall, supposedly.)

This is bad.

If I don't find a way to clear this negative energy then neither myself nor this place will ever know peace again.

How stressful!

I feel the prick in my left eye—but no! Now more than ever! No!

I recite my Make a Decision Quick Mantra!

AWFUL

FALAFEL

BROTHEL

It works. I've made a decision.

“Scorpio, I will tell the people about this place.”

“Pisces, please.”

“The disgustingness has flowed into me and now I am the vessel that must transfer it onward and clear it away.”

“Pisces.”

“Awareness!”

“Pisces!”

“It's my mission now!”

“Unbelievable.”

I go to a hole (the door, supposedly) and look out.

The guests are collecting near the bar. And on the veranda. And in the Garden. It's disgusting. Their ignorance rises and pricks at my nostrils, my eyes, but no...

“Scorpio, did you bring your selfie stick...? Scorpio, did you—”

“No.”

“OK. We'll do this the old-fashioned way.”

“Don't do this, Pisces.”

“But they need to know about the disgustingness.”

“Pisces.”

“And I will tell them about the disgustingness.”

I go.