

## CHAPTER TWO OF PISCES

IN WHICH

*Pisces defeats Gemini  
in a mantra match*

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How typical!

I sobbed the speech—once, twice—  
and wasn't sure if anyone was paying  
attention. But then—thrice—the people  
started listening. And then—frice—the  
bricks began to fly. And now—fice—I've  
been forced to take cover in the palm  
fronds!

I think we all know what this means!

I recite my Persecution Mantra:  
Authorative Restorative Pejorative

AUTHORATIVE

RESTORATIVE

PEJORATIVE

It works. I'm definitely being  
persecuted.

Zod damn these people!

Damn thier apathy. Thier cruelty.  
Thier persecution.

The way people are makes me want  
to be a murderer, or a dictator, or at least  
a human rights violator. People who  
degrade and demean don't deserve to be  
treated like human beings. Humanity is  
so unutterably disgusting I can't even  
say!

So I recite my Silence Mantra:

It works. I have nothing to say.

So I recite my Silence Mantra again...

Oh these fronds are so peaceful...

I could just lay here...

And melt away...

CLINK

CLINK

What's that?

CLINK

Hey now! What's that noise?

CLINK

Who's infringing upon my right to  
remain in silence?

CLINK

“Hello!”

CLINK

“I am meditating here!”

CLINK

Wait a minute.

CLINK

Where's the path?

CLINK

Where am I?

CLINK

Ouch!

CLINK

These fronds are really sharp!

CLINK

“...could totally be traced to the fact that my childhood heroes were manikins with missing limbs because let's be real...”

— I plug my ears —

Dear Zod.

What's that whispering?

— I unplug my ears —

“...if you can maintain a super haughty attitude as a naked amputee then you're pretty much set as far as confidence goes and confidence goes a long way...”

— I replugin—

A disembodied voice?

Within a maze of unending darkness?

What does it mean?

— I unplugin—

“...and it's not like I have an infatuation with being disinterested...”

— I replugin! —

— Oh Zod —

“...because how could anyone be addicted to apathy...”

— Oh no —

“...outside of the obvious truth of what happens to my brain when I take a trip down Mary Jane Lane...”

— Has the trauma from my persecution coagulated with the evil I was attempting to dispel to create a California demon spirit who's sole goal is to destroy my sense of sanity and purpose? —

“...ahahahahahaha...”

— Quick! Pisces! Recite your Strongest Mantra —

“FORTUITOUS

CIRCUITOUS

GRATUITOUS!”

— I unplugin —

Silence...

Silence...

Silence...

“BUDDHAMA RAH RAH!”

Zeepers! Something heavy crashes through the fronds on my left!

“STUDIUS FASUVIOUS!” I blurt out in defense.

“BUDDHUZZAH BLAH BLAH!”

Another heavy object falls on my right.

“NO!” I scream, “PATRIARCHAL SPARKLE!”

“CAW CAW RAVEN THAW!”

“FIRE SHIRE TIRE AND IRE!”

“OPAH!”

“OPRAH! OKRA! DON'CHA!”

— I re-plug!—

No, Pisces! No! It's not just your mind that's losing sense—it's your mantras too! BUT NO! You can take the mind, evil California demon, but you can never take the mantras!

— I unplug! —

“Ye Delicatessen

To self-expression:

End this mantra messin'!

Although your testing

Has me guessing

The blessing

Of my addressing

In all honesty confessing

'Tis a strength and not a lessening

More a flexing than a vexing

So be gone lest further hexing

Send me on in firm T-rexing

Through the order of your jesting

Which to me is quite perplexing

Zod knows Karma is a Witch!”

I hear mumbling...

Familiar...

Human...

Disgusting...

I follow it.

It leads me out of this painful darkness. Ouch. Back to the fringes of the fronds.

It's a crowd. A crowd has gathered around the Pond. Holy Zounds. That's my crowd. That's my calling from the darkness: My people. My purpose. My persecution. I have defeated the evil California demon spirit! I am no longer a mantra follower. I am a mantra missionary.

I recite my Missionary Mantra:  
HALLELUJAH BOOYAH

HALLELUJAH

BOOYAH

It works. I am emissioned.

I clear my throat: