

AUTUMN

Episode #7

"Clean Living"

Written by

Madelyn Starr

INT. JADE'S APARTMENT

This episode takes place entirely in Jade's apartment, with the exception of the podcast clips she plays for us. The sound of windchimes occasionally intensifies based on the tension in the scene.

JADE

It's times like this that I regret living alone. I had a roommate when I first moved to LA, but Autumn paid me enough to be able to get my own apartment. That's one of the reasons I stayed so loyal to her. That's hard to find, and good pay makes you willing to put up with a lot of BS.

I guess that's probably all over now. I'll need to find a new job. Maybe a new apartment. There's no way she'll want to keep working with me. And I-- I don't know how I could work for her after everything that's happened. But God, I loved my job until all of this.

What a waste.

The worst part is she's partially right. I am lonely. I spent so much time with her and working on things for her. I don't even know who I could call if I need a roommate. Fran was right too. I let Autumn take over my life and I don't even know who my friends are anymore besides her.

Why was everyone right but me?

Jade takes a deep breath, gathers herself.

JADE (CONT'D)

One thing I was I was right about was Cosmic Dust. There was something wrong and I figured it out. But now-- There's no point moping and feeling sorry for myself. I need to figure what Autumn did and what the fae want with her. Maybe then I can find the missing women.

Windchimes.

THEME MUSIC PLAYS

JADE (CONT'D)
Autumn, episode 7. Clean Living.

INT. JADE'S APARTMENT

The sound of a phone ringing.

FRAN (ON PHONE)
Hey, you've reached Fran. Leave me a message if you want me to get back to you. Otherwise we'll never speak again!

BEEP.

JADE
Hey, it's me. I know I shouldn't have called. I just really need to talk to someone. So yeah. You don't have to call me back. I'm sorry. Bye.

She hangs up the phone.

JADE (CONT'D)
Yeah, I gave in. Even if he thinks I'm crazy, I need to talk to someone about this. And he's never liked Autumn. Maybe that would make him more inclined to believe... Or he'll call a wellness check on me. Okay. Moving on. Let's go through everything I've figured out. I want to take this break, away from Autumn and not beholden to her whims, to lay it all out and try to put it together. So. To start. I've accepted that it's faeries. Fae. Fae folk. Whatever sounds the least insane. But it's true. Faeries are real, and I don't know what their plan is. What could they possibly want with us? So let's go through this. That stone man thing - Lochlan - he said that they want more of something, and that has to do with the dust. Cosmic Dust, which has fairy dust in it.

(MORE)

JADE (CONT'D)

They're using Autumn to get something by giving fairy dust to people - to humans - through her supplement powder.

Is that how Autumn got mixed up with them? Did they find her Instagram and decide that she was the perfect influencer for their scheme? Do faeries use Instagram?

She considers that.

JADE (CONT'D)

Huh. Anyway.

She said they're not honoring their end of the deal. So Autumn made a deal with the fae like an idiot. That's the first thing I learned when I started digging into the folklore. Never make a deal with a fae. They're the definition of chaotic neutral, tricksters who will find every loophole in your words and leave you with much more or less than you expected.

But of course Autumn would think that she could outthink fae. She always has to be the smartest person in the room. The ego on that woman is unmatched.

She's wound herself up, takes a breath.

JADE (CONT'D)

I've been going back through our old episodes and I think this started way earlier than I thought. Autumn's been playing a long con. Listen to this. It's from our episode on clean eating from a year ago.

She clicks play on her keyboard, cutting us to--

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - AUTUMNAL VIBES RECORDING

This is old Autumn and Jade, friendly and laughing, their rapport and chemistry present.

AUTUMN

We all know our own bodies best, so I can only speak from my own experience, but I know I feel better when I eat whole, organic foods and cut out anything processed. And it's that simple!

JADE

Sometimes you just need that midnight junk food though.

AUTUMN

But do you? Honestly, do any of us? We could reach for something full of chemicals that we definitely can't pronounce, or we can have something healthy and nutritious and soul nourishing.

JADE

Mmhmm. So what do you reach for at midnight when you're stressed?

AUTUMN

I love some celery sticks - from the farmer's market, of course - and all natural almond butter.

Jade starts laughing.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)

What?

JADE

You're a role model for us all, Autumn.

AUTUMN

Why are you laughing? Ducklings, why is Jade laughing at me?

Autumn starts laughing too.

JADE

Okay, okay, so for people who don't have your impeccable self-control and may just be starting out on a journey to clean eating, how should they start so it's not so overwhelming?

AUTUMN

It's really not as hard as it sounds, Jade. We're just trying to eat food in its natural state, or close to it. Fresh fruits and vegetables instead of canned or frozen, whole grains instead of white bread, simple things that are just going to a different shelf in the same grocery store. It might take a little more time to chop, yes, but it's worth it.

JADE

And eliminates processed foods.

AUTUMN

Exactly. We don't want any of those yucky additives or preservatives. Any preservatives at all actually. The vitamins and adaptogens and nutrients should be as close to their natural state as possible. So that includes salt.

JADE

Salt?

AUTUMN

Yes! It's a natural preservative, and while it might be natural, that doesn't always equate to good. We eat so much of it in our modern lives that adding more of it is really unnecessary and unhealthy. We're not trying to pickle ourselves! Cutting it out completely is such an easy first step.

JADE

You want us all to cut out salt?

AUTUMN

Don't be salty about it.

JADE

Oh, god.

AUTUMN

Seriously though. It's totally possible, babe, trust me.

(MORE)

AUTUMN (CONT'D)

There are other herbs and spices that will make up the flavor in a cleaner way, I promise. Things that can add to your wellness rather than stagnate or hinder it.

JADE

And it's more heart healthy.

AUTUMN

Yes!

They laugh together and the episode fades out.

INT. JADE'S APARTMENT

Jade clicks out of the episode. She sounds a little raving mad here.

JADE

Do you see? Salt. Who recommends cutting out salt besides doctors? But faeries apparently hate salt. It repels them. They'll avoid things with salt in it, so by telling her listeners to stop eating it, she's making them more susceptible to fae. And that's from a year ago! She's been setting this up for a long time. And not to make this a clip show, but a couple months later, in an episode on clean beauty, she said this.

Jade clicks play.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - AUTUMNAL VIBES RECORDING

AUTUMN

--And all of this goes beyond even just the products we use on our skin and our hair. Everything that we put on our body should be completely free of anything that might be harmful.

JADE

Like what? We already talked about clean skincare and makeup. What else do you mean?

AUTUMN

The best example is your jewelry. That touches your skin, ducklings, but we always forget to consider it in these conversations. You wear it all day long, sometimes even sleep in it if you're feeling a little lazy - I know I've been known to not bother taking off my necklace. So why would we use less than acceptable materials in our jewelry? Nickel, iron especially - these are common but so potentially harmful. Iron is so bad for your skin, honestly just throw it all out--

The episode pauses.

INT. JADE'S APARTMENT

JADE

See? Iron. Another thing that wards away fae. She's slowly been giving our listeners advice that would make them more vulnerable, all in preparation for her launch of Cosmic Dust. And no one picked up on it because who would believe that, first, fae are real and, second, they're working with a wellness influencer for their schemes? And she made me complicit. I prompted her to explain that her "ducklings" should ditch iron! I bet I'll find more if I keep digging through, but we put out a lot of episodes--

Jade's phone rings.

JADE (CONT'D)

It's Indigo.
(into phone)
Hello?

INDIGO (ON PHONE)

Jade. Things have gotten out of hand.

JADE

I know, I've been looking into Autumn more and it's all--

INDIGO (ON PHONE)
Jade. Listen to me. This has gone too far. I don't want you to contact me again.

JADE
What?

INDIGO (ON PHONE)
Something disturbed my wards last night. It nearly broke through. Do you have any idea how powerful something would need to be to do that?

JADE
That might not have to do with this.

INDIGO (ON PHONE)
It was fae, okay, I know it was. And you're the only person I know messing around with them.

JADE
I'm not messing around with them. I didn't ask for this.

INDIGO (ON PHONE)
I know. But you're still involved now. Do any of them know your name?

JADE
I don't know-- oh. Yes. One does.

INDIGO (ON PHONE)
I was afraid of that. Names are power to fae. If they have your name, they can find you. I can't help you anymore.

JADE
You're the only person who believes me. Indigo, I need your help--

INDIGO (ON PHONE)
I'm sorry, Jade. People depend on me. I can't risk it.

JADE
So what am I supposed to do?

INDIGO (ON PHONE)
Protect yourself.

JADE

How?

INDIGO (ON PHONE)

I can send you wards and herbs.
Maybe an iron horseshoe. But you
can't come by the shop, and maybe
you should take a step back too.

JADE

I can't step back. I need to get to
the bottom of this.

INDIGO (ON PHONE)

Then I can't do anything for you.
Goodbye, Jade.

JADE

Wait, before you go. Have you ever
heard of a fae who looks like
stone?

INDIGO (ON PHONE)

Stone?

JADE

Yeah, like a man but made out of
living stone.

Indigo thinks for a beat.

INDIGO (ON PHONE)

That could be a Spriggan.

JADE

A Spriggan?

INDIGO (ON PHONE)

They're a solitary fae, a member of
the Unseelie Court.

JADE

Unseelie?

INDIGO (ON PHONE)

They're the fae who tend to live on
the edges of even their society,
and if you've garnered their
attention... They're more dangerous
to humans, more intentionally
malicious.

JADE

And this Spriggan is one of them?

INDIGO (ON PHONE)

Most likely. But Spriggans essentially function as a sort of fae enforcer. If you've seen one, he is working for someone else.

JADE

Who?

INDIGO

I don't know. If he's the one who knows your name... Jade, this is getting worse and worse.

JADE

Great. I won't involve you anymore. Thank you, Indigo.

Indigo hesitates.

INDIGO (ON PHONE)

Good luck, Jade.

The call ends.

JADE

There goes my one ally. I'm on my own, armed only with my information, rowan berries, and rosemary oil. At least Autumn cared that much.

That's one answer though. One down, about seven thousand left. Lochlan is a lackey. I wonder if he's who bothered Indigo last night.

Oh god, how much danger am I in? He made such a point to Autumn that he knew my name, almost like he was using it as a threat against her.

So who is he working for? It's someone Autumn wants something from, though how I could possibly figure out what individual faery she made a deal with is beyond me. But I have been looking through the terms and conditions that customers agree to when they buy Cosmic Dust, and there's a clause here, buried deep, that the purchaser accepts the deal presented by the host.

(MORE)

JADE (CONT'D)

Meaning people aren't just ingesting something they don't understand, they're agreeing to something to.
Maybe I should focus on--

There's a KNOCK at her door.

JADE (CONT'D)

(grumbles)

Not the time for an interruption.
Coming!

Jade walks to the door and opens it.

JADE (CONT'D)

Autumn.

AUTUMN

Hi, Jade.

There's a long pause.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)

Can I come in?

JADE

Uh, sure. What are you doing here?

The door closes.

JADE (CONT'D)

Actually, have you ever been here before?

AUTUMN

I don't think so. It's cute!

Autumn thinks it's a dump in the way only a boss can.

JADE

Thanks. Why are you here?

AUTUMN

I know you haven't been feeling yourself lately. I could sense it on your aura. So I just wanted to stop by, bring you some healing soup, and make sure that everything is alright before we really dive into hiatus.

Autumn sounds breezy, a little stiff, but she isn't acting like they had a vicious fight the day before.

Jade is baffled.

JADE
That's nice of you, but...

Jade puts the soup dish down.

AUTUMN
But what?

JADE
I didn't realize we were on
speaking terms.

Autumn laughs.

AUTUMN
Why wouldn't we be? It's just a
little mental health break.

JADE
Well, I don't know if I'm ready to
act like nothing happened. We both
said some really nasty things
yesterday, Autumn.

AUTUMN
You remember that?

Jade takes a sharp breath.

JADE
Why wouldn't I remember our fight,
Autumn?

Autumn forces a laugh, covering.

AUTUMN
I only meant that I prefer to let
go of things said in the heat of
the moment. Dwelling doesn't do
anyone any good, babe.

JADE
Kinda hard not to dwell.

AUTUMN
Jade, I felt completely sick to my
stomach after our fight yesterday.
That's not how I want to ever leave
things with you, and that's really
why I came by. Silly of me to think
we could just pretend nothing
happened.

JADE

I guess we both haven't been ourselves.

AUTUMN

Totally. You know I love you, Jadey. And I do see everything you do for me and Autumnal Vibes. I'm sorry for everything.

JADE

Yeah. Me too.

Long pause as they both process.

AUTUMN

Our auras already feel clearer, don't they?

JADE

Sure.

AUTUMN

You know, I should have come over ages ago. No wonder your energies have been off. We should do some serious feng shui in here. Your couch really should be in the commanding position, and you need like three times as many plants in here to purify the air. When was the last time you charged your crystals?

JADE

It's been a while. Autumn, I was kinda in the middle of--

The windchimes tingle and Autumn gasps.

AUTUMN

Windchimes should never be inside, Jade, I thought you knew that! I'm going to take those down--

JADE

Don't touch them.

AUTUMN

They disrupt the energy flow in the room--

JADE

I don't care. I like them.

AUTUMN

C'mon Jade, don't be silly.

JADE

Autumn. It's my apartment. Leave them alone.

AUTUMN

Fine.

The chimes go again and Autumn reacts oddly, like she's suppressing a groan of pain.

JADE

I appreciate you coming by, but I was in the middle of something.

AUTUMN

I saw your laptop was open to old episodes. Working on a project for after hiatus?

JADE

Something like that. Just ideating. I'll let you know if it leads to anything.

AUTUMN

Well, you always come up with something clever, so I'm sure it's going to be genius.

JADE

Thank you for the soup.

AUTUMN

Eat the whole thing, babe. It will help align the systems of your body. And remember, no salt or other additives. That will completely throw off the chemistry of it.

JADE

Of course.

AUTUMN

I guess I'll see you after hiatus.

JADE

Take care of yourself, Autumn.

AUTUMN

You too, Jadey.

The door opens and closes.

Jade sinks back into her chair with a heavy sigh.

JADE

A month or two ago, that would have worked.
She was surprised that I remembered our fight. She thought she erased it from my memory and she could just go on like nothing happened. How long has Autumn been using fae magic to manipulate me? I guess one way to find out...
Let's see what a little salt does to this soup.

She shakes some salt in. There's a puffing sound.

As she speaks the next monologue, her anger grows, but there's also a sadness dwelling.

JADE (CONT'D)

Woah. A puff of smoke came off the soup as soon as I put salt in. I think that means there was a spell or something in it that the salt got rid of.
She's still trying to use magic to control me. Everything she does, it's about maintaining the illusion of her perfection and power over us lowly mortals. When really, she can't admit that she's just as powerless as the rest of us. She had to resort to making a deal with the fae in order to get whatever success she has!
That has to be it, right? They made her famous and influential and rich in exchange for what? Priming young women to be kidnapped into the fae realm?
As long as I've known Autumn, she's needed to be liked, to be in charge. It's like she's constantly trying to prove to herself and everyone else that she belongs where she is at the tippy top of the ladder she constructed herself. It's honestly sad that she had to resort to magic rather than earning her way there.

(MORE)

JADE (CONT'D)

I used to think she was so effortless and confident, the type of woman who everything comes easy to, and now I know that it was all completely fake.

And it wasn't just me. She's betrayed her listeners in the process, people who trusted her to help them feel better, and just handed them over to the fae folk without a single thought about their wellbeing.

And she made me complicit in that! I helped her.

And I'm the only person who knows the truth about her. I'm all alone figuring this out. I don't have anyone I can work through this with or talk to about it. I guess besides you. Whoever you are. But someone else will only listen to this if something happens to me, so... I guess I hope I really am talking to no one. As depressing as that is.

She groans.

JADE (CONT'D)

I'm going to try one more time and hope Fran answers.

She calls, not on speaker.

JADE (CONT'D)

Oh, hello? Who is this?

No, I called because... Well, I've been going through something. I haven't heard from him in a couple weeks. Why?

(pause)

What?

(pause)

How long?

(pause)

Yeah, of course, I will call you if I think of anything. Please let me know if I can help. Okay. Take care.

She hangs up and takes a long moment to gather herself - ragged breathing, suppressing a sob, etc.

JADE (CONT'D)

Fran's mom answered his phone. She said that no one has seen him for three days, and his phone was just found this morning by a trail in Griffith Park.

He would never have taken Cosmic Dust. But Autumn was so upset that I called him again. She called it a "regression of my progress." That can't be a coincidence, right? Did she get the fae to kidnap him? How much of my life has she been orchestrating?

What if -- what if even the breakup was because of her?

I need a minute.

She clicks off the recorder, but before it turns off we hear her break into a loud sob.

INT. JADE'S APARTMENT - LATER

Jade has gathered herself. She's steely and calm, her decision made. Emotion bleeds through at times when she starts to get overwhelmed.

JADE

This has all gone too far. I'm done. Autumn is done. She has been manipulating and controlling and *puppeteering* me since I met her. She moulded me into what she wanted me to be, her perfect devotee, her lackey, her supplicant.

Well, she forgot one thing. I started as a skeptic. And she's made me a believer in the wrong thing.

I've edited all this information into two files. The first, which has everything in it, the entire supernatural truth, is hidden on my hard drive and a remote backup. The second has all the information about shady business practices and Cosmic Dust being dangerous, just with the fae stuff removed. That file is easier to access and in more places.

It's all the evidence that can expose Autumn as the grifter she is once and for all.

(MORE)

JADE (CONT'D)

Because I'm done rolling over for her. She doesn't know what's coming, and she can't stop this.

CREDITS MUSIC

CREDITS

Autumn was created by Madelyn Starr.

It was written and produced by Madelyn Starr.

It was edited and produced by Evan Moreland.

The cast of this episode is Leesa Kim as Jade Adler. Carolyn Vasko as Autumn Gandara. Caroline Stevens as Indigo. David Rogers as Fran.

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END OF EPISODE 7