

AUTUMN

Episode #4

"Ancestral Healing"

Written by

Madelyn Starr

INT. JADE'S CAR

Jade drives.

JADE

Sometimes I feel like my life is just happening to me. Even before-- everything-- it's like I'm a spectator. I moved to LA because that was the thing you do after college. Then I took the job with Autumn because it was offered to me. And here I am, three years later, not really sure what I have to show for it.

It's gotten worse over the last few months, that feeling. It's like I'm drifting from place to place, event to event, and it feels like I'm in a daze half the time.

Autumn would say it's because I'm looking at my phone too much, or my chakras aren't balanced. Something like that. And now I've somehow come to the conclusion it's because she hypnotized me.

But what if it isn't? What if I'm just someone who lets life happen to me?

Ugh. That self-hypnosis better hold. It has so far.

A car horn HONKS at her.

JADE (CONT'D)

Alright, alright, I'm going! I guess I have been distracted. It's been a couple weeks since I've had a real update. I've still been recording my day, but nothing unusual has happened for a bit. I haven't missed any time or forgotten anything, so it looks like the hypnosis practice did work. Autumn's been perfectly normal and lovely.

We even did that spa day she promised to take me on. It was actually really nice. Whatever she's gotten herself mixed up in now, Autumn has been really good to me. I almost feel guilty for thinking she might be doing something bad.

(MORE)

JADE (CONT'D)

We are friends, and I know she doesn't really have a lot of people in her corner. But even with all that I have not been wasting time! I organized all the recordings, put it together on a drive so if someone listens to it, it will make sense. I sent Cosmic Dust samples to some other labs, and all of them have the same response: one unidentifiable ingredient, insufficient materials, inconclusive results. And my materials were not insufficient! I sent huge samples! It's almost as if there's something blocking them from looking at it, from seeing what's really there. The sheer number of labs giving that response is suspicious to me, and I can't imagine that our customers would be happy to hear about it. So now...

Her car parks and shuts off.

JADE (CONT'D)

I can't believe I'm doing this. Right now, I'm about to see an herbalist slash witch to see if more alternative methods might give me some answers, however dubious they might be. Don't ask me how I was able to track down a witch. This is Los Angeles. I'm actually surprised I haven't come across her before when we've looked for guests to have on the podcast. Her name is Indigo, so that's nice. I guess. Okay, here I go.

The car door opens & closes.

INT. INDIGO'S SHOP

Sound of a bell ringing as the door opens.

Jade coughs.

JADE
That's a lot of incense.
(loud)
Hello?

Footsteps approach, Indigo pushes through a beat curtain.

JADE (CONT'D)
Hi?

INDIGO
Merry meet.

Indigo is calm and breathy.

JADE
Indigo?

INDIGO
Who else would I be? And you are?

JADE
Jade. We spoke on the phone? I have
an herbal remedy I need to
identify?

INDIGO
Ah. Yes. What an unusual request.

There's a pause as Jade expects her to keep talking.

JADE
Right. There's an ingredient that
labs can't identify and I've gotten
reports of--

INDIGO
Are you recording this?

JADE?
What? How--

INDIGO
Poppet, you're meant to ask
permission.

JADE
I know, I'm sorry. It's just--
things have been happening to me
that I can't explain. Things that I
think are connected to this powder.
So I felt like I had to.

INDIGO

Hmm. There's a strange energy about you. As if you've been messing around places you ought not. You have the stink of other realms all over you.

JADE

Yeah, I have no idea what that means, so--

The sound of Indigo making tea.

INDIGO

Have you been forgetting things you shouldn't?

JADE

Yes. How did you know that?

INDIGO

This is more concerning than you led me to believe on the phone. Tell me everything that's made you feel this way. Every detail.

She puts a mug in front of Jade.

JADE

What is this?

INDIGO

Just chamomile.

JADE

Oh. Well, no thank you. You'll understand in a minute. Can I keep recording? With the memory gaps, it's become a security thing.

INDIGO

Alright then. Your story?

JADE

Um, well it started with my job. I work for a wellness influencer named Autumn Gandara...

THEME MUSIC PLAYS

JADE (CONT'D)

Autumn, episode 4. Ancestral Healing.

INT. INDIGO'S SHOP

JADE

So the self-hypnosis seems to be working, and I still don't know what is in Cosmic Dust.

INDIGO

And that's everything?

JADE

Everything I remember.

INDIGO

It's all very curious.

The sound of a match striking.

JADE

What's that?

INDIGO

Myrrh, for protection.

Jade coughs.

JADE

Is another incense really necessary?

INDIGO

Yes.

JADE

Oh.

INDIGO

I believe you, Jade.

JADE

You do?

INDIGO

Yes. There is something very strange and concerning happening to you, potentially even dangerous. This Cosmic Dust, it does seem to be at the center of your tale.

JADE

What do you think it is? Aliens?

INDIGO

Aliens?

(laughs)

No. But I can't say for certain
what it is until I dig deeper.

JADE

I don't know if Autumn even really
knows what it is, or if she's being
blackmailed by that man I heard.

INDIGO

Perhaps. Can I keep this?

Plastic bag crinkling as Indigo inspects the Cosmic Dust.

JADE

Yes, please. I brought that sample
for you. Do you think you can
figure out what's in it?

INDIGO

I hope so. It may take some time to
break it down to its base parts,
and then I'll need to identify
them.

JADE

Do you know how long? It's just,
I'm worried...

INDIGO

A week. Maybe a little longer. I am
worried too, Jade. I think you
ought to wear something for
protection.

JADE

I'm recording everything--

INDIGO

I mean spiritually protective.
Supernaturally protective.

JADE

Okay, like what? Do you have
something I can buy?

INDIGO

Yes, but it won't be as powerful or
effective as if it was something
given to you in love. Do you have
anything like that already?

JADE

Like what?

INDIGO

Like the Eye of Horus, the troll cross, a cornicello, a hamsa.

JADE

No, I don't-- oh, wait. My grandmother gave me an evil eye necklace once.

INDIGO

That'll do for now.

JADE

It's just a cheap souvenir.

INDIGO

That doesn't matter. The symbol and the intent it was given with is all that does. The evil eye isn't perfect in this case, but it's better than nothing. Promise me you will go straight home and put it on.

JADE

Okay. Yeah, I will.

INDIGO

Good. I'll call you when I have news. Good luck, Jade Adler. Merry meet again.

JADE

You too? Thank you.

Jade leaves.

EXT. CITY STREET -

The sound of the shop bell ringing as Jade leaves the shop.

JADE

That was weird. She must have had some kind of sensor for recording devices, right? Cause if I have to start believing in magic now--

Jade laughs uncomfortably.

JADE (CONT'D)

Maybe she is a witch. I don't know. But saying that... it feels like an admission. Like there really is something happening out of my control, out of anyone's control. But Indigo, well, I have to admit she was compelling. And she's the first person who really listened to me when I told her everything that's been happening. She's the first person to take it seriously, take me seriously.

I'm stopping by my apartment for the evil eye before going to work, which will make me a little late. I don't know if I fully believe I need it. But I'm desperate, and I have a gut feeling that Indigo knows what she's talking about. Three years of working for Autumn couldn't turn me into this much of a believer, but the last couple of weeks... Oof.

Okay, I'll be right back--

The recorder clicks off again.

EXT. AUTUMN'S GARDEN

Jade opens the gate, the sound of gravel crunching.

JADE

I haven't worn my evil eye in literal years, but I guess if the witch says that I should... How has this become my life? What was that?

There's a tense pause.

JADE (CONT'D)

(whispering)

I think I saw someone moving in the garden. We don't have any guests scheduled for today.

(louder)

Is someone there? Hello?

No answer. Gravel crunching as Jade creeps around. The mic picks up a GIGGLE that Jade doesn't hear.

JADE (CONT'D)

(quietly)

It was over here. I saw a face looking out at me from one of Autumn's mushroom circles. It looked like a man, with a beard, but he was so close to the ground. We made eye contact, and then he blinked at me and turned behind a fern.

The gravel stops as Jade stands still.

JADE (CONT'D)

He was right here, I swear. There's nothing-- oh my god.

Jade starts to laugh.

JADE (CONT'D)

Autumn got a little ceramic garden gnome to hang out with the toadstools. Aw, he's kinda cute. Hey, buddy. I'll have to ask her your name, won't I?

She laughs and the gravel crunches again as she moves away.

JADE (CONT'D)

I must really be losing my mind. What a relief, though.

She's still chuckling at herself as she opens the door.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO

Zen sounds. Jade closes the door.

AUTUMN

Jade! You're late, is everything okay-- what are you laughing at?

JADE

When did you buy the garden gnome?

AUTUMN

The what?

JADE

The garden gnome you put by the mushroom ring. He's adorable, but really startled me.

(MORE)

JADE (CONT'D)

Out of the corner of eye, I thought he was moving.

AUTUMN

Oh. That. Yeah, I picked him up at the nursery over the weekend. Completely forgot about it until now. Glad you like him.

JADE

Thought I was losing my mind for a minute.

They both laugh, but it feels forced on Autumn's side and too relieved on Jade's.

AUTUMN

Are you, you know, feeling better?

Jade is touched at Autumn's concern.

JADE

Yeah. You know how it is. Working through things.

AUTUMN

Are you sleeping better? Seeing your demon less?

JADE

Oh, somewhat. I'll think it's getting better and then she'll pop up again.

AUTUMN

I wonder who she is.

JADE

No one. She's from my imagination.

AUTUMN

I mean symbolically. Well, if you need anything, you know I'm always here.

JADE

Yeah. Thanks, Autumn.

AUTUMN

Of course, Jadey.

There's an awkward pause.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)
Nice necklace, by the way.

JADE
Oh, thanks. It was--

AUTUMN
Should we get started?

JADE
Yeah. Let's get started.

They settle in to record - chairs creak, mugs land on the table, mics are dragged closer.

JADE (CONT'D)
Ready?

AUTUMN
Oh, real fast, I know things have been stressful for you lately, so I thought this might be helpful...

Autumn slides a piece of paper across the table.

JADE
What is this?

AUTUMN
Just some talking points to help keep things on track. I elaborated on your outline a little.

JADE
Autumn, this is practically a script.

AUTUMN
I just wanted to take some pressure off you.

JADE
That's not--

AUTUMN
Let's just record. Okay?

JADE
Fine. Room tone.
(beat)
Alright. Five, four...

Silent three, two, one.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - AUTUMNAL VIBES RECORDING

SFX: Autumnal Vibes intro harp.

AUTUMN

Welcome to Autumnal Vibes, where every season is right for wellness! And that's so especially true right now, because if the energies feel a little weird to you, you are not alone. Because it's our favorite time of the astrological calendar -- Mercury is indeed in retrograde!

JADE

Again? I feel like it's always in retrograde.

AUTUMN

Only because it's so obvious the times it is. I'm Autumn Gandara, and that other lovely, sexy voice you hear is my producer Jade Adler.

JADE

Welcome back, everyone.

AUTUMN

I thought that, with the heavens being all askew and whatnot, today would be a perfect time to chat about an equally esoteric and important facet of wellness: ancestral healing. We all know we come from a long line stretching back through time, but what most people don't know is that traumas and unresolved conflicts can be passed down through your lineage. In order for us to be fully healed and present today, we need to heal the traumas and spiritual wounds of our past, which includes the weight our ancestors carry. And there's even science to back this up! Jade?

JADE

Well, science hasn't said anything about healing ancestor's wounds yet, but it is true that researchers have found markers of inherited trauma in children of Holocaust survivors, giving them more anxiety and panic disorders.

(MORE)

JADE (CONT'D)

But being able to move on from trauma you haven't experienced personally is tricky.

AUTUMN

And that's why understanding your own family history is so essential to your wellness journey. How can you ever truly heal if you don't know what might be lurking in your family's past? Healing your ancestor's wounds will connect you more to the here and now, and allow you to properly heal your own wounds, as well as finally access your ancestor's blessings. It's hard work, I get that, and so often is muddled by misunderstandings and family legends. But it is so worth it, and I can tell you that from my own experience. I didn't really understand my own background until I first met my mother as a teenager, and that was when I was finally able to discover my true self.

JADE

What do you mean, when you met your mother? You weren't adopted.

AUTUMN

Not in the traditional sense. But I had to find out who she really was to find who I really am.

JADE

I don't understand--

AUTUMN

And that's okay. This is hard, complicated work. It doesn't always make sense, at least not on this physical plane. The emotions will pull it together though. Because we're working with the ancestors who are still impacting us today, we have to meet them where they are and do the forgiveness work that it takes to connect with them, mentally and spiritually.

JADE

Like... find a medium?

AUTUMN

That's definitely one way to do it! If you feel like you're sensitive to energies and you can sense loved ones long gone, then perhaps a psychic or a medium is the best path forward for you. But it's not the only one.

JADE

So how else can we connect with our ancestors?

AUTUMN

This is actually a fun one. I know, everyone, wellness CAN be fun! It can be as simple as reconnecting with your culture and heritage. Make a traditional food that you haven't had since your grandma died. Learn a traditional dance or song. Find ways to work aspects of your lineage's lives into your modern life, and you'll suddenly start to feel them all around you. Undoing the wounds of assimilation can often be the first step to healing the wounds that resonate down family trees. This is something I did once I made my teenage discovery. I dove headfirst into my mother's culture and people and world, and you know what? It was magical.

JADE

That does sound nice, and I understand what you mean. The necklace I'm wearing today was a gift from my grandma, and since I put it on, I feel almost lighter, safer.

AUTUMN

Exactly. You can't see, ducklings, but our dear Jade is wearing an absolutely lovely evil eye charm. So she's not just connecting to her ancestors. She's letting them help protect her in the here and now, pulling the ancestors into relevance in the modern world as part of her ongoing life journey.

JADE

Do you have any examples from your journey, Autumn? I bet it would be so helpful for our listeners to hear some specifics since it sounds like you did a lot of work on this.

AUTUMN

I did do a lot of work, thank you for acknowledging that. But unfortunately, no, I don't have specifics to share. There are somethings I want to keep to myself, and I'm sure our listeners will understand that.

JADE

(laughing)

You did a whole episode last year about vaginal health and your personal yoni egg journey.

AUTUMN

And your point is?

Autumn is oddly harsh. Jade stammers.

But then Autumn catches herself, returns to her cheerful podcast persona.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)

There are some things that aren't for public consumption, and knowing that balance is also part of our own personal wellness. But that's a whole other episode about digital hygiene, and probably one that we should touch on, don't you think Jade? For now, let's talk about something a little bit more grounded. Yes, ducklings, it's time to talk about Cosmic Dust again.

Jade has a quiet intake of breath.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)

Because I just can't stop talking about it! I cannot truly express to you how beneficial and yummy it is--

Jade interrupts.

JADE

Cut. Autumn, I think we shouldn't keep--

AUTUMN

I swear to the goddess, Jade, if this is about Cosmic Dust. You know I don't believe in cutting in the middle of recording.

JADE

Well, sometimes you have to. I wish you would take me seriously with this, Autumn. It's not a joke.

AUTUMN

Jade, I thought we were past this. It's clinically proven. We haven't even heard from that Eliza girl in ages, right?

JADE

Yeah--

AUTUMN

Because she's doing better! So that means the complaints have slowed because the product is working? Just like I told you would happen?

JADE

I guess so.

AUTUMN

You guess so? Give me some more credit here, Jade. We have a business to run and are building a dedicated customer base. This is good! Can you accept that maybe you're not the only person who knows what they're doing?

JADE

I don't-- Okay. Yeah. You're right.

AUTUMN

Thank you. And don't call cut! It's important that the podcast be in the moment and an authentic conversation. Now, can I redo that?
(without waiting for an answer)

(MORE)

AUTUMN (CONT'D)

I'm sure you're all getting tired of hearing me talk about it, but I just can't stop because it's so beneficial and yummy and just straight up healing. Cosmic Dust is my specially formulated supplement powder designed to help stimulate brain function, decrease inflammation, and flush out all the toxins that hinder and harm modern women. And I am doing something absolutely bonkers today that I have never done before. I am offering a completely free trial of a week's supply of Cosmic Dust, free shipping and everything, because I believe in it so much. So head on over to our website to take advantage of that, and we'll see you again soon. Jade?

JADE

You can find us at autumnalvibes.com and on all social medias. Don't forget to rate and review us, and please, recommend us to your friends.

AUTUMN

Because wellness is for everyone! And the more people who get well, the better our society becomes too. I'm Autumn Gandara.

JADE

I'm Jade Adler.

AUTUMN

And this has been Autumnal Vibes. Kisses!!!!

She makes a bunch of kissing noises.

SFX: Autumnal Vibes harp outro

INT. RECORDING STUDIO

Jade and Autumn both take off their headphones.

AUTUMN

Ok, except for that little hiccup that I will so kindly forget happened, that went well.

(MORE)

AUTUMN (CONT'D)

I can tell you're putting the work in to recover from whatever weird mental break you were going through, and that was just a hiccup.

JADE

Uh-huh. Thanks. And I'm sorry for interrupting, but Autumn, don't ever give me a script again.

AUTUMN

I really thought it would be useful.

JADE

You can see how that would be insulting, right?

AUTUMN

Thank you for pointing that out to me, and I appreciate you giving me the chance to show you better kindness in the future. But you didn't even need it anyway! Autumnal Vibes is back, baby!

JADE

It sure is.

AUTUMN

And Jade, I do know how lucky I am to have you looking out for me. Don't think for a second I take you for granted.

JADE

I appreciate that, I do. It's been a rough few--

AUTUMN

Shh.

JADE

What?

AUTUMN

Be quiet.

JADE

Autumn?

AUTUMN

Shush!

Autumn is serious, and through the quiet we can hear a bunch of strange sounds, some natural (distorted birds, loud wind, etc) and some not (grinding sounds, strange creaking sounds). They continue, until Jade GASPS, there's static, and the recording cuts out.

INT. JADE'S APARTMENT

Windchimes. It's quiet, calm, a contrast from the previous scene.

Jade jolts awake.

JADE

What-- where-- oh no.
I don't remember how I got home.
It's happening again.

She groans in frustration.

JADE (CONT'D)

I'm so sick of this.
Okay, but I was recording, right?
That should have answers.

Pause as Jade goes through her recorder.

JADE (CONT'D)

There isn't anything here. It just cuts off when Autumn told me to shut up. I wouldn't have turned this off, and I don't think she knows I'm recording. So how...
What if--
What if all of this is in my head? I'm paranoid, absolutely, and maybe for good reason, but paranoia is also a symptom of lots of things. And all of this. Could I just be delusional? I was looking up aliens and fairies two weeks ago, for god's sake.

She gathers herself.

JADE (CONT'D)

A while ago, I read about illusory pattern recognition. We, like humans as a species, are really good at spotting patterns because of evolution.

(MORE)

JADE (CONT'D)

The monkey who recognizes that red berries are more likely to be poisonous lives longer, that sort of thing. And it's still hardwired into our brains, and is why we see, like, shapes in the clouds or faces in a popcorn ceiling. But we can take that too far. We'll look for patterns places where there aren't any, convince ourselves that things are connected even if just a coincidence, and that's how we get conspiracy theories.

What if I'm just looking for patterns that aren't there? I'm looking for someone to blame and fixated on Autumn because I'm scared. Scared that I'm making all this up.

It's not impossible, considering my family history. That's what I'm meant to be doing now anyway, right? Going back to my ancestors to make sense of who I am and how to improve myself?

God.

This is an inheritance I definitely never wanted. No one in my family likes to talk about this.

I had a great-aunt who had psychosis. And the 50s and 60s weren't a great time for a woman with extreme paranoia.

(laughs darkly)

She got the works.

Institutionalized, shock therapy, basically everything short of an actual lobotomy.

I don't know what her diagnosis would be today. I don't even know what her delusions were. My grandmother never spoke about her -- I don't know if she was ashamed of her sister or of not helping her. So really all I know is what I was able to overhear at family events and piece together stories, and what was said at her funeral when I was a kid. But what if whatever was wrong with her is wrong with me too?

Jade tries not to cry.

JADE (CONT'D)

I don't know what I'd prefer, what seems less crazy. I have some inherited mental illness, or my boss is somehow supernaturally or preternaturally or whatever controlling my memories and brainwashing me. All I know is that whatever this is, whatever is wrong with me, I need to fix it. But I won't know how until I get to the bottom of it. Of everything. Even if there isn't anything really wrong. I'll find that out too.

There's an alert from her phone.

JADE (CONT'D)

What-- huh. I set a search alert for that customer Eliza, just in case. Call me paranoid. But I guess I wasn't wrong...

She mumbles under her breath as she reads and then gasps.

JADE (CONT'D)

It's a missing person's report. The day Eliza and her new husband returned from their honeymoon, she went out into their backyard and hasn't been seen since. That's why we haven't heard from her. It's not because she stopped having problems with Cosmic Dust symptoms. She disappeared. Eliza is missing.

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.

(MORE)

CREDITS (CONT'D)

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show, visit autumnpodcast.com and
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END OF EPISODE 4