

Granny Panty - Sarann Spiegel

"I had a vision," I tell Simone as I topple into my seat at the bar. She stares at me over her sexy librarian glasses she doesn't actually need to read *Giovanni's Room*. They symbolize her hot job at a curated vintage store on the Lower East Side. She's just that *en vogue*. So *en vogue* that if "Vogue" by Madonna started playing, instead of dropping into a quick duckwalk she'd scoff and ask *what IS this*, because she only listens to cool jazz like Alice Coltrane, her life guru. She is the best audience for my vision.

I swipe my hand across the air in the universal sign for *imagine this in lights!* She stares. "Granny panties," I say. I wait, leaning forward, a huge smile on my face. "Right?"

She blinks lazily behind her glasses. "Granny panties," she repeats.

I shake my head and sigh. She doesn't get it — *yet*. I pull a pair of white cotton underwear out of my bag, the waistband thick and bare of a brand name. The cotton sags a little bit in the ass, as is its wont. I hold the pair up for Simone to see. "Look. *Really* look." She raises her eyebrows, so I gesture for her to lean in. She does after rolling her eyes. "Are you getting it? Do you see the vision? This is the next big thing, Simone. We have to tell fashion week."

Her maroon lips turn down at the corners. "Just because you buy your underwear at CVS doesn't mean that the rest of us should."

"These aren't from CVS," I tell her, not disclosing that I bought them at the Duane Reade on Duane and Reade. "Simone—" I look her right in the eye so she knows I mean business—"forget Victoria's Secret. Forget Calvin Klein. Who cares about Jeremy Allen White's bulge on Houston? Not me. And not you after you get yourself a pair of granny panties."

Simone squints at me. "Where is this coming from?"

I ignore the question. "People are wearing these. Celebrities. The foundation has been laid. Haven't you seen *Bones and All*? Taylor Russell at the end?" I snap twice. "Is this ringing any bells?"

"You know I think cannibalism is ruining this country."

I do. She listened to a true crime podcast on Jeffrey Dahmer too young and now takes any reference to cannibalism extremely personally. She won't even engage with vampire media, no matter how much gay sex it includes. Perhaps I thought her boner for Timothée Chalamet would transcend emotional and physical blocks. "Simone, you're the only friend I have in this business. My only ally on this front." I reach across the table, clutch her wrist. "I think this could really be something. Don't you see it?"

She takes the underwear from my hands, lays it on the bar. With a sharp black nail, she traces the seams, lining, ass sag. "What do you want me to do?"

Simone schedules a photoshoot for us in an old office building by Madison Square Park. We ransack a Walgreens on our way there. The brand we got has a little less sag to it, so while whatever NYU student Simone hired this sets up his camera, we take turns pulling on each

other's underwear. We wear white Reformation tees and fuck-me-pumps. Simone is wearing a sunglass version of her librarian spectacles. Before the shoot, I called her asking if I should shave or go full bush, what did she think would be better for our image? She paused while eating her Pret A Manger salad to say, "Full bush. More natural that way. We're selling... body positivity."

NYU guy asks, "How do you guys know each other?"

*How do you know Simone*, I want to say. Simone steals the opportunity: "We worked together in high school." We were two white girls in a sea of many working at Brandy Melville. I got fired for trying to shoplift stainless steel jewelry via my vagina. Simone got fired a week later for, and I quote, "having a personality."

We lay out on the throw pillows arranged on the white backdrop. Simone starts out on her stomach so she can show off her tramp stamp — a small stick-n-poke arrow she got in tenth grade pointing just a little east of her ass. NYU guy starts taking photos, asks if we want to play music. I vote for Charli XCX, lord and savior. Simone votes for Miles Davis. We compromise on John Lennon. Neither of us enjoy it, but we can bemoan his abusive tendencies together.

Something sparkles in NYU guy's eyes. "Why don't you two..." He gets stuck on the word and, in turn, his political correctness. "Kiss. Or something."

Simone turns to me, maroon mouth a grim line. "Only if you promise not to fall in love with me." I cannot see her eyes through the tinted lenses, but I imagine them insincere, verging on mockery. I roll my eyes at her, wave her on.

We lean in at the same time, brush our lips together primly. The world flashes as NYU's camera shutter clicks open and closed repeatedly. John Lennon moans in the background. He's been my top artist on Spotify the last four years in a row.

As Simone predicted, the internet obsesses over our photoshoot. We get thousands of likes within hours on our Instagram account @grannypanty4eva with a bio reading, "COMING SOON." Our most popular post contains two photos: in the first, our backs are to the camera, ass sag on display as Simone looks over her shoulder; in the second, we lay on the pillows and our lips brush. Simone thinks the former is the favorite. I don't tell her how sure I am it's the latter. Comments range from extremely gross (perverts) to extremely gross (coquette girls trying to make cocaine chic the new heroin chic, which is *so* misguided). One comment, however, is a standout: "Wait why am I kinda into the granny panties though..."

"They're so vintage," Simone's voiceover announces in another viral clip of her slapping her own ass in slow motion, the slight cotton sag vibrating and, for a millisecond, appearing to float. "So, like... eighties. And seventies. And sixties, and fifties, and possibly even ancient. I'm talking Egypt, Mesopotamia. Indus Valley, even."

We get so much interest from designers that the question, rather than being *who wants us?*, becomes *who doesn't?* We agree Gucci is so over, Miu Miu and Loewe are too of the moment, but Chanel... Chanel just might be so back. Yeah, Coco was a Nazi, but we're not and Simone thinks she was Jewish in a past life, so it all, like, evens out I think. Emails roll in. Vogue

claims Anna Wintour asked for us personally. Simone deletes it: “If they’re going to lie, I won’t do it.” The Times calls to ask about our design. I say it’s entirely original hand sewn work and hang up before they can ask anything more, like who is doing the hand sewing. Simone dismisses my worries about a lawsuit, saying no granny panty producer cares to hunt us down for our crimes.

“Oh my God,” she says. I look up from where I’m embroidering “GYLF” into the saggy ass of my panties. GYLF with a Y, as in Granny You’d Like to Fuck. “Chanel is offering us front row seats at fashion week.”

I stab myself with the needle. So deep, in fact, that the needle is stuck in the flesh of my palm. “Really? Actually?”

She nods. “And they want one of their models to walk in a Granny Panty prototype.”

Waving my hand around does nothing to remove the needle. “Holy shit.”

“I know.”

“I think I need to go to the ER.”

Simone waves me off. “Help me write a response email first.” I hover over her shoulder, breathing in her Le Labo perfume as she types. After a half hour, we settle on, “Um, DUH?????” She sends it while we wait for the Uber that never comes. We can’t call a cab since neither of us carry our wallets and I don’t believe in Apple Pay — it’s like *1984* but real — so we walk the six blocks to the ER. Simone complains the whole way that her shoes are giving her blisters. The needle falls out on Greenwich. We shrug and walk back to her apartment. On the way in, her neighbor asks if we are the girls from the Granny Panty ads. We sign our first panties.

Fashion Week is kind of a snoozefest. We wait on a line to get in, wait in our seats once inside. I wear a Juicy Couture sweatshirt and, of course, my now-famous underwear. Simone wears a pair too, and a tank top made of Ziploc bags. Her nipples are hard in the air conditioned room. Normally I’d try not to look, but it’s hard when her shirt is Ziploc. I try to start a conversation to distract myself. “Are those, like, snack size or freezer quart?”

Simone looks at me like she did when I told her I was a klepto but that I wasn’t sneaking stuff out via vagina. She’s the one who taught me to do that, the reason I later got fired from our job of good, honest work. She also taught me how to insert tampons. “Do I look like I’m snack size? I’m a gallon at least.”

“If you say so,” I say, because what do I know about Ziploc fashion sizing? I poke at the needle-hole in my hand.

The main lights turn off and the stage lights go on. Models start strutting, tall and slim. They all kind of blur together. I turn to Simone and whisper under my breath, “We wouldn’t be here if you never got the granny panties thing. Imagine that.”

Her mouth twists into a *why are you talking right now* shape. She’s honestly kind of really lovely. She glances back at the stage, shoves my shoulder. “It’s the Granny Panty model.”

I don't look over. Simone hisses, "You're missing it, you're missing it," but I can't stop staring at her in her dumb Ziploc top.

I say, "I think I'm in love with you."

Simone is incandescent with rage. "I know, you cunt." For a moment it sounds like "I know *you*, cunt," and I think it a love confession in return, but Simone's eye roll clarifies it is not. I turn away, catching our Granny Panty girl as she disappears from the runway, then spare a glance at Simone's breasts. Breasts are really more teardrop-shaped or triangular than anything. It is in this split second looking at Simone's glorious rack that I realize: cone-shaped bras. That's what's next. I can hear the voices of the masses already: *It's just so retro*.

After the show, a very ugly woman in an equally horrifying suit approaches us. She works for the company whose underwear we are pawning off as our own. The Times is publishing an article about it tomorrow. In her hand is a manila envelope. "You've been served."

Simone slaps my hand away. "Don't take that." She glares at the woman, then leans down to unbuckle one of her fuck-me pumps. "The only thing I serve, lady, is fucking cunt." The shoe comes undone; she lobs it at the woman.

The heel strikes her wrinkled forehead, toe crushing her nose. "That's assault!" she yells, skin purpling and bent nose bleeding.

Simone grabs my hand and starts running down the street — or hobbling, since now one of her legs is five inches longer than the other. I bend down to unbuckle her other shoe for her, and once I have it in hand, we take off. Sirens echo down the block. I doubt they're for us, but my heart jumps and we speed up. Who knows how fast we're even running — the last time I did any exercise was when I was a klepto, and I only did kegels then.

Simone may not love me back, but here, running down Fifth ave hand in hand, saggy GYLF asses blowing in the wind, I know I have her forever.