

AN INTERVIEW WITH

Sybil Tansey

SO, SYBIL, WHAT COLOR IS YOUR HAIR TODAY?

(Snorts) What a great way to start an interview! Nice to meet you, too.

I DIDN'T MEAN TO BE ABRUPT . . .

In fact, it's Raspberry Explosion, and it really sets off my emerald contact lenses. No wonder you heard about my looks. I think Libby secretly wants to mimic me but she's just too placid for her own good. I'm working on her. (Chuckles) Although, come to think of it, guys ten years younger—like, my age—are constantly checking her out. She's really gorgeous, even without makeup. I do have to admit that there's something stunning about her long, dark hair with virtually no gray showing yet. Imagine never having colored your hair!

YOU AND LIBBY SEEM UNLIKELY FRIENDS.

Yeah, but variety is the spice of life, right? Libby's centered, grounded—maybe “serene” is the right word. I like hanging around her. She doesn't say all she thinks, and that tickles my curiosity. Too modest for my tastes and a real penny-pincher, but she'll learn.

HOW DID YOU TWO MEET?

She was slaving away under a miserable boss at the card shop across the street from my own business. She popped into Amulets Alternative Apothecary one day for an antihistamine, which of course I don't carry, so I sold her an aquamarine crystal to clear her throat chakra. She did return it for refund the next week, but it got us spending our lunch breaks together, anyway.

On that subject, I'm picking up on a slight hoarseness in your voice, Deb. You should stop by Amulets for this great product my clients swear by—Peruvian eucalyptus and Indian fennel powder. Both holy herbs.

UMM, THANKS. I DO HAVE A BIT OF A COLD, BUT I JUST NEED A BOWL OF MY MOM'S CHICKEN SOUP.

Soup! Don't get onto that topic. Libby is always brewing up some concoction or other. It takes precious time we could be spending on shopping or relocating her to a condo in my complex.

I HEAR SHE'S A SOUP GOURMAND. WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE LIBBY RECIPE?

Well, she once tailor-made a zucchini soup for me spiced with lemon balm and lavender. Said it might calm my restlessness—as if I want to dampen my zest for living! But it did taste great. Generally, though, I stay away from her kitchen. She's not vegan and that's going to kill her someday. If she'd only listen to my advice about healthy eating. (Clucks tongue) She won't even consider the Mediterranean diet, never mind trying a Japanese liver detox or an ayurveda blood purifier from Nepal. She'd rather make soup. What a homebody she is, in every way.

THAT BRINGS ME TO THE TOPIC OF TRAVEL. I UNDERSTAND YOU'RE A GLOBETROTTER, SYBIL.

Yeah, I plan my trips around sourcing local cures that our own culture has overlooked. I've been to a whack of destinations not frequented by plebian tour zombies. For example, I have a line on dried lizards—for asthma and impotence—in Damascus, and I think I can fly there and still make a great profit on the product! Oh, but . . . well, of course, one's soul trumps one's income, so I'm also committed to touring sacred sites that bring me inner peace, over and over again.

INTERESTING. WHAT'S YOUR NEXT BOOKED DESTINATION?

I'm hitting up a region in Sweden that grows mistletoe for its anti-inflammatory effects. It's near a valley of ancient human sacrifice to the fertility god Freyr. And of course I'd follow that with a night or two at a famous hotel where guests sleep on blocks of ice. Refreshing way to retire, especially with the right roommate—

LET'S NOT GO THERE, SYBIL. TELL ME ABOUT YOUR FAMILY.

What's to tell? Big, noisy, Irish. I avoid them—which drives Libby crazy. She's always telling me I shouldn't take them for granted. Especially my father.

RIGHT—SHE DOESN'T HAVE A FAMILY, DOES SHE?

Her grandmother passed a while ago and you'd think she'd get over it already. When my mother succumbed to the family curse of breast cancer . . .

GO ON?

Well, sure, I was sad for a bit. But through meditation and communion with my spirit guides, I refocused my energies and took a trip. Poor Libby, stuck in her antiquated ideas that bog her down. I'm thinking of insisting she consult an area medium known for her paranormal abilities who might be able to call up old Gram and get Libby's grieving out of the way.

SO DYING DOESN'T SCARE YOU?

I celebrate the afterlife! Haven't you heard about my love for cemeteries? I've seen some of the most important burial grounds in the world and sensed the ecstasy of resident spirits there—the Catacombs in Paris, the Recoleta in Buenos Aires . . . Libby's fixated on the demise of her grandmother when life—and the afterlife—offer so much divine distraction.

FORGIVE MY FORWARDNESS, SYBIL, BUT OVERALL YOU SEEM A BIT FRENETIC. I WONDER IF YOU'RE REALLY RUNNING TOWARDS LIFE OR, INSTEAD, AWAY FROM DEATH?

Now you sound like Libby. Oh, look at the time! Sorry, but I've got to go. Stop in soon at Amulets and I'll set you up with that eucalyptus-fennel miracle.

