

Jeannie YOGINI

By K Bryson Perov

Jeannie K Williams is **28** years old.

She's smart.
Successful.
Pretty.
NORMAL....OR SO she's been told.

Tonight she leaves her cubicle.
She'll be **SKIPPING** drinks at the **bar**.
Because tonight is **RYT** orientation.
Less booze.
LESS **DANCING**.
Definitely less bitching.
But a welcome change by far.

Jeannie's work is **THE** same as **ever**.
Nothing ever changes there.
Her **STYLE**, drinks, **CONVERSATIONS** are largely on a loop.
It's been **years** since she even changed up her hair.

So **IF** this is it...
This is life,
Well **AT LEAST** she could be more **zen**.
Maybe a little fitter.
MAYBE it'll give her somewhere else to **go**,
instead of work,
the **BAR**,
then drunkenly turning in.

At the studio, it's **PACKED**.
Jeannie tensely squeezes through.
Don't meet eyes.
Set up **YOUR** mat.
This is just like every other **Flow** class...right?
SURE....you know what to do.

With **all** these yogi's-in-**TRAINING**,
she stretches and she **sweats**.
Then they break,
peel **ON** fresh clothes,
hydrate,
and **in** a giant circle they **SET**.

This isn't so **bad**,
 I got through that **FLOW**,
Jeannie thinks as she plops to the floor.
 The instructors lay out the **INTRODUCTIONS**.
 You'll start with your **name**...
 Ok I got **THIS**...
 But wait, there's **more**.

You'll start with your **NAME**,
 Then something about you that you **want** everyone here to know.
THEN tell something you don't want to **share**...
THAT thing in your life that makes you **cringe**? That's where you **NEED** to go....

Jeannie's breath **becomes** shallow.
 Her **shoulders** begin to rise,
MEANWHILE all this menial shit in her life **flashes** behind her eyes.

BUT these people aren't sharing this **meaningless** stuff.
 They're being real, vulnerable, digging **DEEP**.
 I can't go there,
Jeannie silently panics as one by one,
folks peel their masks away,
UNTIL it's all **eyes** on her.
 It's **Jeannie**'s turn to speak.

"I'm **Jeannie**."
 "Hi, **Jeannie**."
HER heart pounds.
 Full eyes wait.
 "I work in data entry... a lot of numbers... typing...
 I don't hate it, but it's not great."

Jeannie pauses,
TAKES a breath.
 It **rattles** her like coins in a **CAN**.
 "I don't really know what I'm doing here..."
 She looks down into her **twisting**, sweaty hands.

"I don't know what I'm doing here..." **Jeannie** says,
 this **TIME** louder so the whole room can hear.
 "Or anywhere for that matter..."
 Her **FACE** heats.
 "I belong nowhere..."
 She finishes as her **eyes** brim with lost, desperate **TEARS**.

“Aho!”

The **circle** responds.

And just like that, it's **DONE**.

Then **Jeannie** avoids **eyes** until she's **safe** in her car,

"What the fuck...I thought this was going to be fun..."

Feeling **BARE** and **shamed**,

A **worse** hangover **THAN** her norm,

She **drags** herself **back** the next day.

More **SWEAT**.

More **tears**.

More **digging** and rooting in fears.

Feeling **PISSED**, as if her **whole**, pathetic **self** were on display.

They **MEDITATE**.

They **chant**.

They **laugh**.

They **cry**.

Through **SWEATY** classes, **Jeannie** feels her **strength** and her pains.

And just when she's **SURE** that she **can** make it through this,

She's **face-to-face** with her **lies**,

That **voice** begins,

Her confidence **WANES**.

It's **4** nights in.

Jeannie's **exhausted** and stretched,

In **MORE** ways than she **knew** she could **be**.

Now staring down this **WORKBOOK** of **questions** and prompts,

Suddenly aware of herself,

and **LOATHING** nearly **every**, little thing she sees.

Quit.

In her mind, that **VOICE**, it whispers.

You can't do this.

Quit.

It's all bullshit anyhow.

It **rings** like a **beacon** through her **CONSCIENCE**.

Like truth....

But this "**truth**", this **VOICE**, if **this** is where it's brought her...

What the fuck does it **KNOW ANYHOW?**

She slams the book shut,
 Out her door, DOWN the hall,
 Her bare feet pad onto cold, iron STAIRS.
 Here she pauses,
 Back to RAILS,
 She turns her eyes to the sky,
 Seeking ANSWERS, frozen,
 Jeannie stares.

“I’m here,” Jeannie starts,
 “But I have no idea why...
 All I know is I don’t want this...
 This life where I just exist...
 I just get by...”

The busy urban silence,
 The cold iron at her FEET,
 Humid night,
 Pensive sky,
 Jeannie, eyes shut, breathes LONG and deep.

In a rush Jeannie’s flooded,
 HER outer world all falls away.
 It’s replaced by this TINY version of herself,
 All her lies,
 ALL her pains.

And there in some dark existence,
 SHE’S where that voice was born.

That STEELY tone always assuring she CAN’T. WON’T. QUIT!
 That tireless critic with it’s mean, incessant scorn.

The DARK scene rips open,
 In Jeannie’s mind’s eye, it tears.
 AND she sees and feels that beyond that darkness,
 BEYOND all that confusion,
 There’s LIGHTNESS.
 There’s LOVE and ACCEPTANCE there.

When her eyes flit open,
 All is as it was.
 The sights and sounds of her world are the SAME.
 But now Jeannie knows the source of that voice,
 It’s not of WISDOM or love,
 It’s the voice of her lies.

Jeannie Yogini is CHANGED.

She gets back to **her** homework.
 And the next day in class,
 she **SHARES** everything, **even** when her inner **critic** speaks up.
 And **WHEN** that voice of **lies** tempts her to **hide**, sit out, to **QUIT**,
 She **works** even harder, shows **up**, and stands **UP**.

She **gets** to the studio early,
 Meets **people's** eyes,
SHE says hello first,
 And **when** it's time for **CAMEL**,
 For once, she actually tries!

She **opens** her **HEART**,
 Lets that mask fall **away**.
 And **FINALLY**,
 finally,
 finally.
 (For maybe the first time ever)
She says **EXACTLY** was she means to say.

The yogi's sweat through **charged SEQUENCES**,
 Practice instructing and assisting **cues**.
 They **TAKE** feedback with **gracious** hearts,
 And give it **out** to each other **too**.

From their gurus they learn to be “**wild and holy**.”¹
 To be a “**YES!**”, that they're ready now!²
 They **learn** that their **LIES** are **not who they are**,³
 And that vulnerability and **authenticity** are brave, **no MATTER** who puts it down.⁴
 They **learn** to mean what they say, that's **it's rarely about them**, to **NEVER ASSUME**, and to
 always **do your best**.⁵
 And when asked if you **want the upgrade?** The answer is always **YES!**⁶

Training is finished.
 Monday morning comes **around**.
Jeannie plops **DOWN** behind her **desk** as she has for years.
 Her **desk** plant,
 The **GOSSIP**,
 The **bubbling** coffee mate down the hall,
Jeannie takes it **all in**; **NOTHING** has **changed** around here.

Jeannie takes out a note she made during the **week**,
 The **WORDS** of Iyengar she scrawled across a **page**.
SHE tacks it up by her screen for when **that inner** lie whispers,
 A **REMINDER** of **who she** is for when she feels lost and **caged**.

“Neither knowable, knowledge, nor knower am I, formless is my form,
 I dwell within the senses but they are not my home:
 Ever serenely balanced, I am neither free nor bound-
 Consciousness and joy am I, and Bliss is where I am found.”⁷

She doesn't **KNOW** what's next, but she **KNOWS** what is now.
 Which is **good**, because **LIFE** is about **balance** anyway.
 Like many **YOGA poses**,
 It's about **changing** and **growth**,
 But also finding **BEAUTY** in where you **are**,
 Knowing there's a **time** to **MOVE ON** and a time to **stay**.

Namaste.

- 1 Ana Forrest. *Fierce Medicine*.
- 2 Baron Baptiste. *Perfectly Imperfect*.
- 3 Roger Rippy. *Love Revolution*.
- 4 Brene Brown. *Daring Greatly*.
- 5 Ruis. *The Four Agreements*.
- 6 Albina Rippy.
- 7 BKS Iyengar. *Light on Yoga*.