

Accommodation

James Lynn Smith

(24 min.)

Performers: 1. Narrator 2. Sam 3. Bonnie 4. Ginny

1. Ginny looked across the breakfast table at her husband.

4. Call your sister. It's been a long, long time.

2. We have almost nothing in common. She's rich, urbanized, and reads new age stuff. To her I'm a backward, chuck wagon cowboy living on a ranch.

4. Aw, she's not that extreme. Our kids will be home from college on the 25th. Invite her to spend a week through Christmas.

2. Lord, I'd have to make up excuses to get away from all that chatter about her latest gigolo—er, I mean guru.

4. Now was that nice? Call her anyhow.

1. He rose from the table and ambled to the living room for their phone on the end table. After sitting a while, he punched in the number. It rang several times.

3. Celestial planes of joy to you, seeker. (*breathy, positive*)
1. He rolled his eyes and took a breath.
2. Bonnie? It's Sam.
3. You're on my cell's speaker phone while I do yoga. Who is this again?
2. It's Sam, Sam Woods.
3. Listen you, I don't know any Sam. (*firmly*)
2. I'm your *brother*. Remember, we were hatched on a farm with the chickens. Had a mother and father, too. The whole bit, flesh, blood, diapers.
3. Why are you— (*stops icy tone & turns friendly*) How are you Samuel?
2. We're okay. I wanted to touch base, because it's been so long. Are you doing all right? Your alimony still coming in?
3. I am moving toward ultimate fulfillment. Remuneration is beneath my concerns. The universe provides.
2. (*Aside to audience*) Yeah, long as she has a rich lawyer for an ex.

2. So you are well, and nothing is amiss nowadays.
3. Absolutely... mostly...Well, sometimes my spirit guide sends a challenge.
2. Such as?
3. Yesterday, my health food store was closed, so I went to Wal-Mart. The long checkout line had a woman in front of me with some problem paying her bill. The checker person called for help. Here I was needing to get to my massage therapy session, and she was delaying me. I shouldn't have to wait on financially incompetent people.
2. Oh dear, you are having a lot of stress, after all. (*facetious tone*)
3. I get headaches too, and evolving to higher planes is difficult.
2. Sounds like you need to get away. Come out here and spend a week with us.
3. Oh, I couldn't do that.
2. Why not?
3. You two live in different world; you eat dead animals and animal products.

2. I sure as hell don't eat 'em when they're on the hoof.
3. I mean the animal has to die first. To me that's an abomination.
2. Duh. If we don't abominate animals, we would starve while they overpopulate the land.
3. My spiritual principles don't allow eating animal flesh or products.
2. According to your principles, I'm a sinner headed for hell.
3. I didn't say that. Your karma will press you to evolve to a higher level. That may take several lifetimes.
2. Higher levels, wow. How do you know all this stuff?
3. I'm a student of Swami Probabilata Hanshanta, the enlightened master of several yoga practices—Ouch!
2. What is it?
3. I'm in a yoga position on my back with my legs bent up and feet wrapped behind my head. My toenail is caught in my hair.

2. That sounds serious. You're tied in a knot despite the Swami's calming instruction.
3. Don't make fun—Oww. This is serious. Can't breathe deep like this, it's meant to be a transient position.
2. Call Swami Probable Han-something.
3. Moron, this is not funny.
2. If I were there, I'd want a camera.
3. Cut it out, I'm in distress.
2. You don't want your picture on facetwitter? Be interesting to see your puss there with feet for ears, looking down toward your—
3. You're impossible! And the word's 'Facebook.'
2. Is your underwear without holes? Remember what Mom told us about being ready for accidents.
3. Will you shut up?
2. Just concerned about the scene when the paramedics come.

1. He heard her struggle.

3. Ooh, dang it! I pulled out a wad of hairs getting loose—And you were no help whatever! Did your sense of humor come from castrating animals?

2. Only bulls, made 'em steers.

3. You're a barbarian.

2. Thanks for the compliment.

3. Ginny probably blows through a cow horn to get you in for supper.

2. Actually, it's a conch shell. We'll eat anything from steer to giant sea slugs.

3. Eeyuck. I wouldn't let you peel a peach for me. Your sense of hygiene is an affront to the civilized world.

2. I wash up to my elbows, even if I only clean out the stall. You underrate me.

3. You were underrated at birth. Mom told me your head was shaped like a fruit jar.

2. Ouch, a little anti-rube abashing, is it?

1. Sam grimaced and finally asked the question again.
 2. Aside from all that. Would you like a week out here? We can feed you spinach and carrots, so you don't have to eat road kill.
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1. Sam was thinking *Please say no*. He crossed his fingers.
 3. Hmm. I'll have to consult Swami P first. Let you know tomorrow.
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1. Sam went to the kitchen and announced that Bonnie would probably come.
 2. You can smile, Ginny, but I'm wishing they had something for my ears like those glasses with open eyes painted on them. Then I could snooze without the annoying hums as she penetrates nirvana or makes noisy hawks to dispel unclean spirits.
 4. You exaggerate.
 3. I read that one master taught 'chaotic meditation catharsis' for neurotics.
 4. Just be glad you care about her anyway, Sam. Having family that's different stretches our spirits.
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2. With Sis, I want a *bottle* of spirits. But okay, I'll be civil. She's got to get

approval from her swami, anyhow—*(gleefully)* Maybe he'll say no.

1. The next morning Ginny answered the phone.

4. I'm doing well, Bonnie. The swami said what?...Oh that's wonderful. When can you get here?...I'll be sure to tell your brother; he'll be so pleased.

1. She hung up and turned toward Sam. He looked up from his breakfast with sad, resigned eyes.

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1. Two days later, Sam was on his front porch and saw the white SUV tearing down the long driveway from his gate. A cloud of yellow dust followed the vehicle until it screeched to a halt in front of his garage. Ginny walked onto the porch and put her arm around her husband.

4. It'll be okay. Just be positive.

1. The SUV's door opened and a slender, near-thirtyish woman with tight stretch pants and floral top got out.

3. Haay. I made it, despite bad drivers in my way.

1. Sam stepped off the porch and approached Bonnie. After an awkward hug he spoke.

2. I'll get your luggage upstairs now.

1. He lifted the back hatch and grabbed two large bags. Ginny stepped down, embraced Bonnie, and kissed her on the cheek.

4. My, you're still skinny as all get-out. And you've done something to your hair.

3. I'm letting it grow out and turn it's natural color. For years I died it black. Now it's brown, and draws the power of prana from my crown chakra.

4. Sam's beginning to have a few *gray* ones. His hair draws from the power of stubbornness. Come on inside.

1. After three trips from the SUV to the upstairs guestroom, Sam came into the kitchen where the women sat.

4. Waiting on you, Sam. Bonnie, would you like tea or coffee?

3. No thanks, I am purifying my body by drinking only water.

4. Good. I'll get you some.

3. I brought my own. It's better at conducting prana than ordinary water.

1. Sam shook his head as his sister bounded upstairs. Soon Bonnie came down with bottles of water and put them in the refrigerator.

2. What was in the big plastic sack I wagged up?

3. That's my sacred space. Area rugs, candles, my mandalas, and incense. Only problem is space for setting it up in that bedroom.

2. *(Aside) I don't want to hear this. Next, we'll need a pagoda.*

1. He stood and gestured toward the back door.

2. I'd better go see about the horses.

1 In the barn, he refurbished his hay net. Stalls were open to the corral and led to the pasture where the new foal was close to its mother, munching what little grass was left in early winter.

He thought about Bonnie. What would entertain her? She had been extremely flexible as a teen, able to bend over backwards, touch the ground with her palms, and get back up. But he felt like a tin soldier with little range of motion. Also solid in mindset, whereas Bonnie was buoyant and flighty.

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1. The next day Sam showed Bonnie around the corral and taught her to saddle Minny, one of his horses. He also gave a brief lecture on equine care.

2. ...and in winter, too much grain feed all at once can cause colic. Now let me show you our few head of livestock. All this may seems too earth-bound to you, but it's real life and you need to appreciate it.

1. Her unenthusiastic nod was all he expected.

Late in the afternoon, Ginny struck a metal triangle on the front porch and they went in for supper. The meal was steak, bread, sweet potato, and spinach, with the tofu and nuts Bonnie had brought. Iced tea and bottled water from the refrigerator were the beverages. Throughout the meal, Bonnie was quiet and seemed remote. After eating, Sam went upstairs for medication he kept in the master bedroom .

4. Dear, are you all right?

3. *(deep breath)* Yes, I guess.

4. Doesn't sound very convincing.

1. A loud crash followed by a string of obscenities on the landing atop the stairs interrupted them.

2. What the blue blazes is this? Stumbled over a dang brass Buddha—on a throw rug, for Pete's sake.

4. Be careful, hon. Bonnie's sacred space was too cramped in the bedroom. Turn the hall light on near her door.

2. Why can't space around the bed be sacred? (*frustrated*)

1. Then he remembered the need to be more accommodating.

2. Oh well, I can always walk with a cane. (*Aside*) Dang, that made it worse.

*

1. The next morning, Sam had to run errands in town. He arose before Ginny, dressed, ate cereal, hopped in his pickup and drove off. After supplies were loaded in the back, he ate a light lunch, gawked at store windows and started back. It was mid afternoon when he stopped in front of his garage.

Ginny was sitting on the porch steps, hands to her head as if in panic. When he opened the truck door, she rushed to him.

2. What's got you upset? You look like you've seen—

4. Bonnie's missing! This morning she was gone when I got up. A few minutes ago Minny came wondering back with an empty saddle.

2. I'll saddle up Prince and go look for her.

4. Be careful, we have no idea of what you'll find. And put on your leather jacket, a cold front is moving in.

*

1. Sam nudged his horse gently, looking for tracks and trampled grass. So far, he was making progress. He mused. Bonnie was ten years behind him. Another sister came afterwards, but she had died in an accident. After their father later died of heart related problems, their mother remarried and moved to Canada. As a teen he was quite protective of Bonnie. But why had their lives gone in different directions later on? She married but then divorced. After that, contact with family was even less frequent, and her interests went farther afield.

The trail changed from brush to rocks and boulders, and tracking became a guessing game.

2. *Where would she go from here?*

1. He needed to get into her head, think like her. Before she divorced, she had once been to his ranch. He went riding with her.

2. *Now what area might have attracted her?*

1. Nudging Prince towards higher ground, he felt chill in the air as he came to an area replete with boulders and caves, sometimes a mountain lion. He looked outward at the darkness on the horizon. Distant branches of lightning flashed.

On that past visit, she had suggested they dismount at a high overlook, where one could see for miles.

2. *I sat with her while our horses grazed and she told me her dreams.*

1. Those dreams were not of what would come, but what was inside her head. Being polite, he had listened. But *only now* was he beginning to understand her intense *feelings* of flying, conversing with celestial beings, seeing flora with intense color, and details sharper than so-called reality. Most of this is lost as we mature. Rightfully, she wanted to capture and express those dreams but something, maybe within herself, interfered.

Sam zipped up his jacket against the increasing cold.

2. *Bonnie, there's beauty in your mind...But something else is in there too.*

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1. Arriving at the overlook, he gazed over the escarpment. In the distance, under a heavy canopy of cloud, rain streaked down.

2. *Maybe mixed with sleet, coming this way.*

1. Sam began to call out when he heard a faint sound from an area slightly higher up. He dismounted and gently led Prince upward. Ahead was an outcrop making a roof over a cave, and the sound of weeping underneath. He moved toward her, taking a blanket he had brought.

2. Are you alright, Bonny?

1. She slowly sat up, shivering. Her lips trembled as she spoke in a quavering voice:

3. I wanted to jump...Can't even do that. (*distressed, frustrated*)

1. Her shoulders shook as he placed the blanket around them, and her sobs rolled out like ripples in a stream. Sam felt a need for calm, rather than scolding. He stood and made a call on his cell phone.

2. Found her, Ginny. Rain's coming, so may have to wait 'til later.

1. Sam gathered scraps of wood for a makeshift fire. The cave was large enough to bring Prince underneath. The weather was raw and windy, but the fire was sheltered and they huddled around it.

2. We were concerned about you. Did you fall or something?

3. No, just wanted to end it.

2. 'It?'

3. Over the cliff: end me. (*blurted*) I'm ugly and hate it.

2. Wha—? You are *not* ugly.

3. That's how I feel. No matter what I do, I see them looking away from me with disgust.

1. He hesitated, trying to fathom her comment.
 2. You mean our parents? Your memory of them?
 3. Guess. (*sullen*)
2. When you were born, they were happy. Then came sister Judy a year later. So much hustle and bustle about you two, I felt like the ugly duckling. You were Dad's marvelous little girl.
1. For a moment she had a faraway gaze in her eyes and her brows lifted.
 3. Ah, I had forgotten. (*surprise*)...And that all changed. (*pensive, dark*)
 2. When she died?
 3. Um-hm...(*shaking head sadly*) Dad always told me to look after Judy. I was just a kid, but it made me feel important. When it happened he blamed me. I wasn't even there!
 2. I heard they sent you and Judy to a summer camp. There, counselors separated you into different age groups. Swimming was part of each group's activity, not at the same times. Camp counselors could only apologize profusely and call her drowning a horrible accident.

3. Dad shouted at me, 'How could you let it happen?'

2. By the rules, you weren't *allowed* to watch over her. Even if you were, you might not have been able to save her—That was the *counselors'* responsibility.

3. I hadn't realized *that* was when it all started. Dad would seem angry when I came into the room, then look away or leave. Mom would give me a brief glance with that 'poor dear' look. I felt repulsive, like some ugly pest.

2. Not true, and it's time you realize you internalized that message as a *child*. In reality, Mom and Dad were expressing their pain to you, as if you could stop it.

3. I was just a kid.

2. Some don't realize they are dumping a burden kids can't handle. Pain and anger can be misinterpreted by children and haunt them when they're adults.

3. Guess I need to review this period with an adult's eye and try to let it go.

2. A therapist could help. Or talk to your spiritual advisor.

3. Swami P?

2. If he's for real, or see a chaplain. Don't go it alone. Nowadays, spirit works

through people, not burning bushes.

1. Rain and sleet pelted the ground outside the cave. Sam put more wood on the fire for heat. But he also felt warmth from his sister—and realized that it mattered.

2. You're not the only one who sometimes feels off. I have this annoying feeling that getting older will make me *numb* to life and I'll become a grumpy old codger.

1. She smiled.

3. Seems like you need a lift in the seat of your pants.

2. What does that mean?

3. Kundalini starts in the lower base chakra and rises through others to the crown chakra in your head. There inspiration becomes expressed. There's a power of prana in the muladhara down there, ready to be released.

2. Glad you explained that. I thought it was hemorrhoids.

1. She rolled her eyes.

3. You have a plebian mindset.

2. Thought I was a barbarian. Like Attila the Hun.
3. He died on his wedding night.
2. Carnal excess?
3. No. Got drunk and strangled on nosebleed. Look it up.
2. Heck, I was about to start an Attila club for pot-bellied ranchers.
3. Call it anything, but teach them about muladhara.
2. About mul-what?
3. The difference between the base chakra and their butt.
2. *(Chuckles)* Touché, my sister's got her gumption back.
1. The rain stopped. Brother and sister laughed, hugged and even sang until the fire went out. Just before dark, they doubled up on Prince and returned.

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1. Ginny ran to the corral as Sam and Bonnie rode up.
4. Thank God, I was so concerned. Are you two okay?

2. Couldn't be better. We arrived at a plan.

4. What's that?

2. To have the swami give a session here in March. We can join Bonnie for invitations.

4. What kind of session?

2. It's yoga, but for local appeal we need a subtitle.

3. How's this? 'Yoga for Those with Their Prana Stuck in their Muladhara.'

1. Ginny raised a brow.

4. I'm not sure what that means, but sounds like something to make neighbors gossip for a year. I like it!

1. Sam found his sister to be brighter and more interesting than he thought. She learned about equine care and wanted to return soon.

Late morning of Dec 24, the college kids joined them. The five entered a nearby church that evening and later came home to open packages. Ginny summed up their Christmas.

4. I'm so thankful the diverse characters in my family can get together and be *grateful* for our differences...That's the best gift of all!

Word pronunciations (close enough, anyway)

nirvana	neer vah' nah
prana	Prah' nah
mandala	man dah lah (equal emphasis on syllables)
pagoda	pah go' dah
kundalini	koon dah leen' ee
chakra	tsha' krah
muladhara	moo lod hah rah

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