

CAULDRON CALL

By Jeff Dunne

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CHARACTERS

- ETHANORA A bitter witch, very intent on delivering an eternity of suffering to her ex-husband this Valentine's Day
- CAWKAPHONE Pronounced ka-CALF-uh-NEE, she is fairly intent on making her ex-husband suffer as well, but she's a bit more patient than Ethanora.
- YAGAMAMMA A very happy witch, and a total flake. She doesn't quite get that caging men up with scorpions might not make for a pleasant Valentine's Day, nor does she realize that her teenage daughter is probably not waiting around for her in order to experiment with doing... soap.

SETTING

A cauldron-based Zoom call.

SCENE

(It is a teleconference setting, although ideally each of the participants should have the appearance of leaning over the camera with a background of stars, as if they were looking down into a magical cauldron to communicate late at night. Because they are. At “rise”, only two of the witches are on screen.)

ETHANORA

Blast it all. Why is she always late?

CAWKAPHONE

She’s been having trouble with her cauldron lately.

ETHANORA

She’s been having trouble with her cauldron since 1986.

CAWKAPHONE

I told her to get a new one.

ETHANORA

Did she listen?

CAWKAPHONE

She said she looked, but the new ones all had to be plugged in and that she didn’t need anything with Bluetooth so—

(Yagamamma appears. She is having serious trouble with her cauldron, so sometimes she skips, and after some of her lines her connection freezes and she goes motionless until it is restored.)

YAGAMAMMA

Hello? Hello? Can you hear me?

ETHANORA

Well, it’s about bloody time.

YAGAMAMMA

My cauldron’s been act act act act acting up.

ETHANORA

Yaga, this is intolerable.

CAWKAPHONE

It really is. We're in the final stages, and timing is very important.

YAGAMAMMA

I'm sure it will—

(Her image freezes. After a moment.)

ETHANORA

Maybe we should just try to do this without her.

YAGAMAMMA

Hello? I'm so sorry. I really don't know why this is happening. Ever since I let Daphne use it... I really need a new one.

CAWKAPHONE

How is little Daphne these days? What is she now? Ten?

YAGAMAMMA

Oh no, she's thirteen, and everything's a drama. You know how it is. Last week she got a pimp— *(Freezes.)*

ETHANORA

(After a beat...)

Congratulations?

CAWKAPHONE

Oh dear.

YAGAMAMMA

--ple and you'd think the world had come to a shattering end. I told her that it's perfectly fine for a witch to have a few pimples, but she never listens.

ETHANORA

Anyway, we're already behind, so let's just get down to business. Yagamamma, last week you said that you had a plan to get Gary and Roger into the cage.

YAGAMAMMA

Did I say that?

ETHANORA

That's it! Why can't you ever remember anything from—

(Cawkaphone makes a gesture and suddenly Ethanora can't speak. She's clearly not happy about this.)

CAWKAPHONE

Now just listen here for a—

(Ethanora has made a gesture, and now Cawkaphone can't speak either. They mouth angry/threatening silence at each other while Yagamamma thinks the problem is on her end. During the next line the two continue to yell in silence, but by the end of the line have reached a truce.)

YAGAMAMMA

You're not going to believe this, but now my audio has stopped working. Would you two be able to slow down, and... Hello? Hello? Cawkaphone? Ethanora? I-I can't hear a word you're saying.

(The two other witches make another pair of gestures and they can speak again.)

CAWKAPHONE

It wasn't you, Yaga.

YAGAMAMMA

Oh, oh good. I've got you back. What was that?

ETHANORA

It wasn't you!

YAGAMAMMA

But anyway, I remembered about the cage. Yes, I can definitely get them into it, but the question is how to keep scor— *(She freezes again.)*

CAWKAPHONE

This isn't a sport, Yaga. No one gets points. We just want them to suffer for what they did.

ETHANORA

Ideally all men, but I suppose we can start with just our exes.

CAWKAPHONE

(Suddenly realizing...)

Hell, I think she's frozen again.

YAGAMAMMA

--corpions from killing each other before we get the men in there.

ETHANORA

That's why we keep them in the glass bottles, Yaga.

YAGAMAMMA

Oh dear.

ETHANORA

Now what?

YAGAMAMMA

I got milk jugs.

CAWKAPHONE

So?

YAGAMAMMA

We'll never get the men inside of those. They're way too small. The jugs, I mean—

ETHANORA

No. No no no. The scorpions go in the bottles, the men go in the cage.

YAGAMAMMA

Oh. Oh, good. Then the bottles will be just fine.

ETHANORA

This was supposed to be the perfect Valentine's Day, and she's *ruining* it.

CAWKAPHONE

It'll be fine. Just relax. Now I was able to arrange a getaway vehicle for you, Ethanora. You said you wanted something fast.

YAGAMAMMA

I hope you got her a kow *(freezes again.)*

CAWKAPHONE

No. I got her a... What? No. Why would I get her a cow?!?

YAGAMAMMA

--asaki. They are so bitchin'!

ETHANORA

No one says bitchin' anymore, Yaga.

YAGAMAMMA

My Aunt Lilly used to ride a hog. My sisters and me used to—

ETHANORA

Enough! Stop. Just... enough.

YAGAMAMMA

Just enough what? Anyway—

(Ethanora makes a gesture, and now Yagamamma goes silent. She continues to talk, but we can't hear her voice.)

CAWKAPHONE

You know—

(Ethanora silences her with a finger. Yagamamma continues to talk, and then just as it looks like she is slowing down, Ethanora ends the spell.)

YAGAMAMMA

...which is why to this very day nobody in the whole family will eat pork.

CAWKAPHONE

(To Ethanora)

Thanks.

(Ethanora nods a 'you're welcome'. Yagamamma thinks she is speaking to her.)

YAGAMAMMA

Aww, you're welcome. You know I have a lot of family stories like that.

CAWKAPHONE

Later.

YAGAMAMMA

Yes, some, but some are from the early days too, when—

ETHANORA

ANYWAY... When can you get the glass jugs to me? The scorpions are going to be delivered on the eight. Can you get them to me before then?

YAGAMAMMA

We get-a-get-a-get-a-get-a-get-a-get our milk deliveries on the sixth.

CAWKAPHONE

I think that'll be enough time.

YAGAMAMMA

You know, there's one part of the plan that I don't quite get.

ETHANORA

(Mutters...)

Oh god.

CAWKAPHONE

What's that, Yaga?

YAGAMAMMA

Wendy-tuna-seefy-lern-da-less.

ETHANORA

Excuse me?

CAWKAPHONE

I think her audio is gone again.

YAGAMAMMA

No. It's a little acronym I put together so I would remember. It's short for "When do we tune in to see if they learned their lesson. Wendy-tuna-seefy-lern-da-less. And it's fun to say. Try it.

CAWKAPHONE

I really can't.

YAGAMAMMA

Ethanora, you try it.

ETHANORA

We don't.

YAGAMAMMA

Oh, go on. Try it. It takes a little practice, but you'll get it.

ETHANORA

We *don't* check in on them. We leave them in the cage.

YAGAMAMMA

But who will bring them food and water?

ETHANORA

No one. They can eat the scorpions. Or each other.

YAGAMAMMA

That seems pretty awful.

ETHANORA

That's why we're doing it on Valentine's Day.

YAGAMAMMA

To make it cheery?

ETHANORA

To make them miserable. And hurt. Like they did to us.

YAGAMAMMA

My grandmother used to make soap. (*Her image freezes again.*)

CAWKAPHONE

Oh, god. She froze again.

ETHANORA

Can we just leave her like that?

CAWKAPHONE

She isn't that bad.

ETHANORA

She's a raving bubblehead.

CAWKAPHONE

Yes, but still, she's better than Gary.

YAGAMAMMA
(Coming back.)

Maybe we should try that.

CAWKAPHONE
We didn't hear anything you said after 'soap'.

YAGAMAMMA
What? There wasn't anything. That was it. Grandma used to make soap. Scented soap, if you must know. So, can we do that as our next project?

ETHANORA
Whatever.

(Yagamamma giggles in delight, then turns to call away from the camera.)

YAGAMAMMA
Daphne? Daphne, sweetie? We're going to do soap after Valentine's Day! Do you want to— *(She listens.)* You do?! That's wonder— *(She listens again.)* No, honey. Soap. With an 's', not a 'd'. *(She listens, then turns back to the cauldron.)* Oh well, just the three of us, it seems.

ETHANORA
Alright, well, I'm shutting off.

CAWKAPHONE
Where are you going?

ETHANORA
To order more scorpions.

YAGAMAMMA
But we have plenty for Roger and Gary.

ETHANORA
Yes. I know.

(Lights out.)