

Kieryn:

I'm Kieryn.

Eve:

I'm Hannah, this is kitchen Table Cult.

Kieryn:

Where two Quiverfull escapees, talk about our experiences in the cultish underbelly of the religious right. Hey Hannah.

Eve:

Hey Kieryn, happy Saturday.

Kieryn:

Yes, it's finally Saturday and I have more homework to do. How is your school doing?

Eve:

I have homework? I am in school?

Kieryn:

I know.

Eve:

I am so in denial about this. I got up this morning and I took a long walk with the dog to a coffee shop to get a latte, and pretended my time is my own and my life is my own, and I need to sit and make a list of all of my homework assignments after we're done.

Kieryn:

Yeah. I need to go over what I need to do for homework. So my first essay I finished, and I finished on time, by the skin of my teeth.

Eve:

Yay.

Kieryn:

And then it's not due until next week or the next week. And that was really frustrating, but I wrote about the day my parents decided to homeschool me. Because I was going to write about educational neglect, but that was not scenic enough. So I had to make it like a scene.

Eve:

Did you learn to write an essay before you got to college?

Kieryn:

Yes.

Eve:

Did you learn it in homeschooling? Did you have to teach yourself?

Kieryn:

I learned it as part of homeschooling and part of like... It was weirdly part of speech and debate, is when I put the two together because I was doing a lot of research. So a lot of my cases were sort of really outlining research papers, and I'd been writing forever, and I had Strunk & White's style guide. So I had figured out how to put together an essay, even though it wasn't really explicitly taught. And it was sort of part of speech writing in speech class.

Eve:

Yeah, I learned how to write an essay sort of in high school, but I never really had a good sense of what I was shooting toward. I don't think I really read any essays. And I speech and debate was something I observed, rather than participating in, I was around it, but I wasn't allowed to actually do it. And I feel like I didn't really learn how to write a paper, write a research paper on how to argue something besides BS fallacy, detective-

Kieryn:

Right.

Eve:

... kind of stuff. I didn't know how to write persuasive essay, or an extended paper, despite blogging and writing essays and all of this stuff for forever, until I got to college. And this professor of British Literature at Grove, Janice Brown, would have a writing workshop seminar that she would require all of her freshmen English majors to take, because she was so fed up with freshmen coming into Grove without knowing how to write a proper paper that she just made us go through.

Eve:

I guess she must have used Strunk & White's, but she used some other resources too. And broke down the processes of how to write a good paper. And it was this massive a-ha moment for me, because I had never had anyone do that for me before. I'd always just been handed books and been told to mimic it. But I didn't know the construction, the elaborate construction of it was totally foreign. And so it was really wild and wonderful to have it spelled out for me piece by piece.

Kieryn:

Yeah. I think that's what we're going to... So my next paper is a research paper and I think we're going to go over how that works too.

Eve:

Yeah.

Kieryn:

More of what he's looking for with our style guide.

Eve:

That'll be good.

Kieryn:

So it should be interesting. Because it'll be my first actual research paper that-

Eve:

Does he know that you're coming from this background? How are you interacting with professors now?

Kieryn:

It's hard still sometimes, because the fun thing about being homeschooled is when your parents are your teachers, there's no separation. So my first semester, last year was really, really hard, because I kept feeling I had to appease my teachers. I needed to appease my parents. Which is not actually the thing, that you need to do.

Eve:

Yeah, I had a similar sense, but it was more I felt like I couldn't go to them for help because I would be a burden, which is such a joke because that's to my parents, I couldn't ask for help, because I was the oldest. I was supposed to figure it out and be fine, so that they could direct their attention to the more needy younger kids. But if it was a professor that's their job.

Kieryn:

Right?

Eve:

That's the whole point.

Kieryn:

I did not realize that. And I kind of figured that out with my math tutor last semester, and sort of the semester before that. Because my math class is not a lecture. It's much more like homeschooling, in that it's self-paced and you just sort of move through the book as you go, whatever speed that is. And then we have someone there who's there specifically for us to ask questions to, and to help us at wherever.

Eve:

Like a TA?

Kieryn:

Yeah. Except that she's actually a math tutor and has a degree in math. And that's what she does.

Eve:

Awesome.

Kieryn:

Is she tutors math for the Industrial Maintenance Program.

Eve:

That's fantastic.

Kieryn:

Yeah. And so we have this person who is there, just to be asked to explain math concepts.

Eve:

So with your current professor and this research paper, have you gone to him and been like, "Hey, so this is my background. This is the first time I've actually written one of these kinds of papers." I know it's a community college sort of. It sounds like it's maybe a remedial English class of some kind, but I think that this is a totally... You're in a different universe from probably most people who are taking this class.

Kieryn:

Yeah. Yeah. So the first thing that we did at the start of the semester, because it's English 1A, so it's English Prereq, so you should already know basics. And he had us write him a letter that basically was an introduction letter about ourselves and whatnot. So I wrote down-

Eve:

Oh yeah. I love that when professors do that.

Kieryn:

Yeah. So I wrote down, "I was homeschooled, this is hard for me. I have this background. I have ADHD. I have accommodations with DSPs." So that was basically my letter.

Eve:

Good.

Kieryn:

It was like, "Here's where I'm at. This is what's going on. If you see me missing for 10 minutes at a time, it's because I have to walk to the tower to pee." Yeah, he knows that a little bit.

Eve:

Good. So to our listeners, in case you haven't figured it out yet, the topic of today's podcast is educational neglect. And it's something that really impacts our lives day to day. We're both in school. We're both incredibly competent, high functioning people with mental health problems. I have PTSD and anxiety attacks and being in a classroom setting is always intense for me. Because of all of these things that we've been talking about and I love it. But it causes an adrenaline spike because there's so much history to work through every single time I set foot in a classroom.

Eve:

And Kieryn has mentioned, they need their accommodations for ADHD and being trans and having PTSD, and a lot of these things are kind of direct results of being homeschooled. And this is part of why we're both involved with the Coalition for Responsible Home Education because we are really passionate

about having other homeschoolers not be set up for these kinds of experiences in adulthood. Because homeschooling doesn't have to be like this, homeschooling doesn't have to end this way.

Eve:

I feel like I got a pretty good education compared to a lot of my homeschool peers. But if I look at the kind of education that I got compared to public school or private school peers of mine, I have no experience that comes even close to the kinds of things that they experienced. I was reading this list of things, why education, why teach... It's a textbook for a freshman seminar in education that I was trying to audit here at school.

Eve:

And me just listening to the assumptions about what education should be, was really hard for me to experience because I'm so jealous. I would have loved being in school so much.

Kieryn:

Right?

Eve:

I would have loved to have had things about curiosity and learning how to self-regulate emotions in a professional environment. And having my communication skills affirmed and curated. These things would have been so good, but they just didn't exist.

Kieryn:

Yeah.

Eve:

So it's really hard for us to talk about because we're so passionate about this and it's so personal.

Kieryn:

Yeah. It's something that we have to face every day, all the time.

Eve:

And I think the biggest reason it's so shitty for us to think about and to process, is that it didn't need to be like this.

Kieryn:

Right.

Eve:

At all.

Kieryn:

Yeah. I don't know how gendered your education was or how different it was for your family, between what the boys learned and what the girls learned. But for my family, it was a stark contrast. Where my

brother learned math and had experiences working and having friends and whatever. I was relegated to the home, cooking counted as math. I didn't have to learn algebra because I would never use it as a wife and mother. So my entire-

Eve:

Can you explain to our listeners cooking counted as math? I know what you mean by that, but can you unpack that?

Kieryn:

Yeah. So because when you're cooking, if you're following a recipe, you're doing a lot of fractions. And if you have a big family, like I did, you're doubling the recipe always because the recipes are for four people and you have to feed eight.

Eve:

I was always quadrupling it.

Kieryn:

Yeah, I was always at least doubling if not tripling. And I was able to do that in my head, because when you're making bread, two cups of flour is easily four, six cups of flour.

Eve:

Yeah.

Kieryn:

And so what my mom would do instead of having me sit down with a math book is she would just make me cook all the meals that day. And then I wasn't sitting down learning multiplication or algebra, but I was learning how to do fractions.

Eve:

Yeah.

Kieryn:

Very, very specific fractions that are really easy to do because cooking fractions is so much easier than machining fractions let me tell you.

Eve:

Right. I'm sure.

Kieryn:

I didn't have to measure things in like 5/16ths to cook.

Eve:

I definitely had a consumer math credit that was basically home economics-based math. That I was like, I learned how to balance your checkbook and also all of these other basic household things. It was a

Mennonite textbook that was designed for people whose education ended at eighth grade. I understand the context of where it came from, but the fact that, that was what was used for me as a valid option, because it was too hard to find a tutor or too hard to give me the kind of time I needed.

Eve:

I think I have dyscalculia. Like, I've never had this tested, but the way I approached math never made sense to my mom. And so we'd get into these big fights. And so at some point, I think we both just gave up.

Kieryn:

Yeah, that happened to me too. That's why I didn't learn algebra.

Eve:

I mean, I taught myself Algebra 1, 2 and Geometry. I literally taught myself these things and I sort of got it. But when I was trying to take a college credit, math credit for liberal arts students or something, and the sorts of assumptions about what you knew already coming into the class, just had me floundering the entire semester. And of course I didn't ask for help because I didn't think that I could, I didn't think it was safe to.

Kieryn:

That was something that I've also had to come to grips with, is I still don't necessarily feel it's safe to ask questions, even though I know it's wrong, especially with math. Because my attempt to learn algebra culminated in my mom throwing the book at my face, because she was explaining the number line in a way that didn't make sense to me. And then last year when I'm in class and my tutor explains the number line, my mind is just blown because I'm like, "Oh, you can just walk backwards. Okay. I can get that."

Eve:

It could be so simple.

Kieryn:

Yeah.

Eve:

I think one thing to just pause here for our listeners, homeschooling and unschooling, if they're done from a child centered, Reggio Emilia or a Montessori style approach can be really good. I think that there are educators who can teach their kids at home and do a really great job. I think that there are parents who understand child development, and basic psychology, and can provide a really solid education to their children.

Eve:

But I think it's one of the things that happens with this fundamentalist Christian upbringing, is when it gets brought into the education sphere... Like the world that we grew up in was already so defined by us versus them, these binary fear-based dichotomies, where it was like all or nothing, one way or the other, and everything was a reaction, and everything was feared. And so when you get that plus authoritarian,

Quiverfull stuff, it's like trying to teach yourself education on your own in a surveillance state, where you are an indentured servant. That's kind of what our life was.

Kieryn:

Yes, that's exactly what it is.

Eve:

It was a, "You have to serve this family and work for this family until you are 18, and you can get out and have your own life, and have your own interests and have your own friends, and pursue whatever you want." But until then, the family's priorities and needs come first and pitch in and help, physical labor. And then if you have free time, then your education can come in and don't ask for help, because that's being a burden, and/or please ask for help so we can surveil you more closely, and find more ways to... It becomes avenues for extra punishment, as opposed to an opportunity for growth. And so learning becomes so fraught.

Kieryn:

It becomes dangerous because you're kind of at a disadvantage either way. If you need help and you need to ask for help, none of the responses are going to help you. So if you teach yourself, you're also very limited because all of your resources are monitored.

Eve:

But at least you're not getting beaten with a math book.

Kieryn:

Right. Exactly.

Eve:

In my family, the gender differences were different. The chore responsibilities were very gendered. The social liberties were very gendered. My brother could ride his bike around the neighborhood when his older sister couldn't that kind of stuff. But he wasn't made to do his laundry for the longest time, and we had to do it. So stuff like that was happening, but we got fairly similar educations. And I think I got the better one.

Eve:

I think because I was the first and I got the most attention for the first few years, I got more of a foundation in elementary school than any of my other siblings did. And so I'm watching the ones who were homeschooled all the way through really struggle, because as soon as other children start coming along and they were in the middle and I was teaching myself, they didn't have that kind of close attention and foundation uninterrupted time that I got.

Eve:

To the point that my brother was going to college, and he's a biologist now. And learning about how evolution actually works, as opposed to the strawman theory that was taught to us, like blew his mind and set him up for a month of spiraling over that reality, that cost him a lot of ability to focus on his homework and keep up with his class. And that's just one example.



Kieryn:

It's hard watching my siblings sometimes because I taught myself because I was studious. And that's just part of my nature. Not all of my siblings-

Eve:

You were driven to get out.

Kieryn:

Yeah. And not all of my siblings have or had that capacity or drive to just learn things. And I think some of it is because when I was a kid before everyone else came along, my mom sat down with me after preschool, and taught me how to read, and taught me how to write, and taught me how to count, and taught me how to do all of first grade stuff. So I had all of that individual attention to focus on learning how to learn. And so then I just had that, and I knew how to do it. And so then I just kept doing it. But a lot of my siblings don't necessarily have that, and it's harder for them.

Eve:

That foundation is so important. It makes all the difference.

Kieryn:

Yeah.

Eve:

I remember listening to my host dad in Kurdistan teach my younger host brother to read, and it always was a fight. My host brother, Daniel did not like reading, and he needed to be up at a certain point so that he could keep up with his classmates when he got to the school. And so they did two or three hours of reading practice every day. And my host dad was just unflappable. Daniel would throw tantrums and flail, and run away, and come back and just pout and whine, and fuss and Tom, my host dad was just like, "Okay, are you done? Here's the next word. All right. Try it again." And he was so patient, and I was stunned. I was like-

Kieryn:

Oh my God.

Eve:

The lack of ego in this parent situation is incredible. And this parent is also the authority figure, trying to teach. And there's no punishment. There's no like "You won't get your dinner." There's no like-

Kieryn:

Brat.

Eve:

... "You don't obey me. I'm going to spank you." None of that. He was creating education and learning to be a safe and positive, consistent environment by demonstrating that in his attitude. And I was just enchanted and also heartbroken.

Kieryn:

Yes, that feeling.

Eve:

I feel that feeling a lot. I feel it a lot.

Kieryn:

Yeah. School is hard. It's hard in a lot of ways that I expected and also didn't expect, just because there's so much of that to deal with. Because I didn't realize that it could be so different. I didn't realize that learning could happen in a way that felt safe. I didn't realize that like I could fail, and nobody would be mad at me, nobody minds, it's okay. My machining instructor, I spent five weeks making these bushings.

Kieryn:

Well, actually it was more than five weeks. It was like eight weeks making these, and they're still incorrect. And I went through so much metal and made so many pieces that weren't right until I got ones that were good enough. And the entire time he didn't once get mad at me. He didn't once criticize me. He'd only ever checked to make sure that I was okay and, see if he could help or explain something. And it was magical because it was fine to mess up and it was fine to fail. And that was never something that I'd had before. I can go through infinite metal in the machine shop and it's okay.

Eve:

Yeah. I think that's what it comes down to. I get so moved when I have professors or teachers who come to my defense. Who are advocating for me to me when I'm being hard on myself?

Kieryn:

Yeah.

Eve:

I had this encounter, my tutorial professor last semester, Liz Planer, this woman has a reputation of kind of being tough on her students. And I was being hard on myself in advance of a submission that I felt kind of sensitive about it or was being kind of evasive and vulnerable about submitting this piece of writing. So I wrote this apologetic preface to it, and she was just like, "Please this is insulting to me as a reader, because it assumes that I don't like you."

Kieryn:

Oh my God.

Eve:

And I was like, "But you don't, right?" That's not true, and I knew it wasn't true. But she called me on having that fundamental assumption going in. And I was just like, "Oh." And she was like, "I like you, and I like your story, and I like this project and I'm so excited about it. And I want to read this. Give your reader that benefit of the doubt." Because I was unintentionally setting off antagonistic relationship with my readers, by presuming that I was going to get in trouble, or somebody was going to dislike me.

Eve:

And that can be a form of self-sabotage too, without even realizing it. Having this fear of these authority figures really just like, it makes them want to distrust you back. If they're predisposed to like you already, it's disrespectful to not accept that at face value.

Kieryn:

Yeah. That makes so much sense.

Eve:

But because of where we come from, it's almost impossible to assume that we're going to be safe.

Kieryn:

Yeah. I always operate under the assumption that people are kind of just appeasing me and I'm really just a toxic, terrible person to be around and work with. And maybe people are just nice because they don't want me to get angry or something, I don't know. And I know this is false because I go out of my way to be a nice person.

Eve:

Kieryn, I've been working with you since you were 15, you're one of the easiest people I've ever had group projects with, or like collaborations with, you're so easy to work with.

Kieryn:

Yeah. I know this.

Eve:

I enjoy working with you.

Kieryn:

I appreciate that.

Eve:

I assume that I talked too much. I assume that my opinions are too strong, or that people are going to be bored about hearing me go on and on about something I'm passionate about. Which is such a joke because this podcast is actually providing me with data to counter that belief.

Kieryn:

I know.

Eve:

But I still do it. I get so nervous, and then I work from it and triple over myself and it's ugly. This kind of insecurity is boring, when I run into it and other people, I'm like, "Oh honey, just accept the fact that I like you. And let's move on."

Kieryn:

I know.

Eve:

But I can't extend to myself that same consideration.

Kieryn:

I do this all the time. It's infuriating. My English teacher has been talking a lot about student resistance, which is basically self-sabotage, where you do well and that conflicts with your perception of yourself as someone who's terrible. And then you just self-sabotage. And I'm like, "This has been my entire school experience." Where I do well, but because of all of the times I was told that I would fail in school, and I was not good, and I was bad at math, and bad at doing things, and bad at interacting with people and cut off from any of those opportunities. That whenever I succeed, I start panicking.

Kieryn:

And last night I had an anxiety attack because a lot of progress is being made at school, because the president of the school is on the same page as I am with regards to queer support and whatnot. And so a lot of progress is happening, because I've talked about things, but I was freaking out because it was happening, and it was easy. And that obviously means something is wrong because-

Eve:

You're about to get punished, like it's a trap.

Kieryn:

Yes, it's a trap.

Eve:

I keep beating this drum, but it goes back to the theology. It goes back to the assumption that your kids are sinners who are out to actively rebel, because that is the fallen state of man. And we have to spank that out of them, and we have to train that out of them. And so all of these interactions that these parents have with their kids, are colored by this assumption that the kids are undermining their authority, evil, intending malice. It seeds such distrust between them, it's ugly.

Kieryn:

It does.

Eve:

And so parents can't enjoy their kids' learning processes, or growth experiences, because everything becomes suspect for malicious intent.

Kieryn:

You're obviously intending to make your parents' life miserable somehow. Everything that you do is subject to suspicion of malice because you're a sinful person and you're told that from the time that you're born. That you are inherently bad, and they don't expect that to mess with you. But it does.

Eve:

Yeah. My childhood friend Jory, she and I have been talking about this a lot. She is a travel blogger now. Travel light is her handle, but she grew up in the same church that I did. And we had our parents both go through these phases of withholding things from us. And I think my parents picked it up from her parents or maybe others too. But it was pretty common.

Eve:

Where it was like, "You are enjoying reading Lord of the Rings too much, you can only read the Bible for a month now. Because you are so engrossed in this thing that you are enjoying, that you are not being helpful to the family. And it is becoming an idol and taking precedent over these other things. And so you can do your school and you can read the Bible and that's it." And so when she was in any of these learning processes, anything she was doing that was part of school that she really enjoyed, it would get taken away from her for the same reason, where it's like, "We distrust your joy, because you are rebellious." That is our default assumption about you is that you're bad.

Kieryn:

Yeah. It's so terrible for relationships and for trust building. And my parents didn't understand why I didn't trust them and I'm like, "You didn't set up an environment in which I could trust you."

Eve:

Yeah. Oh God. I have so many directions my mind can go on this.

Kieryn:

I know.

Eve:

It's a little overwhelming. How is the Bible used in this world? Take it away.

Kieryn:

The Bible for my family and actually I'm going to backpedal second here. At one point during the course of our homeschooling, my parents decided that really... They decided that as far as they're concerned, all that you need to know in order to be sufficiently educated is how to do basic arithmetic and write and read the King James.

Eve:

Well, isn't there a Bible verse that kind of sort of-

Kieryn:

Yeah, that's where they pulled it from.

Eve:

Is it in 2 Timothy or something, where it's like the Bible contains all knowledge for health and godliness?

Kieryn:

Yep. Yeah, I think that's where they based that off of.

Eve:

So using the Bible as a primary source document for education and returning to it again and again with every subject, was fairly common in the circles that we ran in. I don't know if it is now with Christian homeschoolers. I imagine that there's been a bit of a pushback against such a kind of balance there. But it kind of comes down to this like, "The Bible is all we need so we can find answers in it for history, and science."

Kieryn:

And social studies and writing and not math. Well, sort of math if you really scour over the description of the arc.

Eve:

Oh God, right? Yeah, the ultimate word question is design the arc. Can you give an example of how the Bible might be used as science in your homeschool curriculum?

Kieryn:

Yeah, actually my curriculum explicitly reference the Bible in their science books. And so what was really fascinating to me after I left was when I discovered science for actually and had questions that were not immediately tamped out by, "Well, God did it." Because all of my science books, in biology for example, they're explaining about basic genetics and X and Y chromosomes and whatnot. And they're like, "And God made man and woman, male and female," and reference the Bible verse to be like, "This is what exists-

Eve:

So bio essentialism is-

Kieryn:

From the bible."

Eve:

... yeah, reinforced by the bible, okay.

Kieryn:

Yeah. And in my science books also these are all put out by Alpha Omega. They would explain evolution, that people believed evolution was a thing. They did not explain evolution. They explained a very poor paraphrase of what people believed evolution is.

Eve:

It was a strawman.

Kieryn:

Yeah. And then we're like, "And the Bible says this is incorrect because the earth was created in seven literal days. See Genesis." So my entire science book just referenced the Bible.

Eve:

Yeah. I had the same kind of experience with Apologia Science written by Jay Wile and it's like basically creation and this, and your Bible and this. It kind of went through and mocked contemporary scientific theories that reinforce evolution as the primary theory of the origin of the universe. And again, it was the strawman theory and I really haven't had the scientific training sense and to counterbalance that. I consider myself a big science fan. I love it and I get really excited about it.

Eve:

And animal facts and insect information and cool, weird theories about how things work. It's so fun. I mean, like the book Emperor of All Maladies: A Biography of Cancer, I loved that. The medical science stuff, it just gets me so excited. But I don't know anything. I don't know any of the building blocks for this whole conversation that I'm so fascinated by. And that's sad and I just haven't had time to rectify it. I will, I can. But it should have happened in high school. It shouldn't have to happen now.

Kieryn:

Yeah. What blew my mind was watching Gilda deGrasse, Tyson's cosmos.

Eve:

Oh yeah.

Kieryn:

And I learned so much that I didn't know about how the world worked and how things worked and it was one of those bittersweet things where, I was so happy and so sad, because for the first time I'd seen science in a way that begged me to continue asking questions. None of my science experience before then kept me asking questions. It always just shut it down with, "It's in the Bible and if it's not in the Bible it's not real." So I never cared about... Well it's not that I didn't care, it's that I didn't know how to care about science, even though I really enjoy it, because there was never any room to ask any questions. There was never anything that wasn't solved. There was no reason to keep going because everything was in the Bible.

Eve:

Because everything returned to the Bible and was final. Okay, so you're in STEM now?

Kieryn:

Yeah.

Eve:

Talk about that.

Kieryn:

Yeah, that was a great idea.

Eve:

The gendering of your background in education and then your transition and going into the STEM field, and all of the feelings with where you come from.

Kieryn:

Oh my God.

Eve:

Talk to me about all of this.

Kieryn:

Yeah, so I thought it would make... So basically what I really wanted was to learn something new that I hadn't learned before. Something that I didn't have a frame of reference of. So it would be a clean slate. Something that is just fresh with new information that isn't tainted. I learned very fast that's bullshit. That's not how any of this works.

Kieryn:

But I was hoping, because as it turns out, when you are denied math and science as part of your education because your parents see you as a walking womb, and then you decide to go into precision machining, that is entirely math and science and algebra and geometry, and all of the higher concepts that you never got because you couldn't teach yourself them. It's a lot. And then it's really interesting because it's a lot on its face. So I'm trying to catch up to actually have the math skills to be able to machine.

Eve:

Yeah.

Kieryn:

But at the same time, I'm dealing with internalized misogyny, but everyone else doesn't see a girl.

Eve:

Yeah.

Kieryn:

So it's weird.

Eve:

Yeah. I'll bet that is weird. Gosh.

Kieryn:

And it's kind of changed a bit over the course of the last three semesters, because I started HRT at the end of 2016, and I started school in the fall of 2017. So I'd been on T for a year, and then I upped my dose the first semester. So all of the physical changes started happening really quickly or intensified I guess rather. So people initially saw me as kind of a girl, and then by the end of last semester there was



none of that left. But it's interesting because I'm in a machine shop, so it's very traditionally male and very traditionally masc.

Kieryn:

And I'm like this trans kid over here, who's not a dude and also not a girl. And so I would feel comradery with the students in my class who were women, but they would be mostly confused because they didn't realize that I was trans necessarily.

Eve:

They wouldn't really invite you into their spaces organically. You had to validate yourself.

Kieryn:

I had to be like, "No, I do have a uterus. I understand."

Eve:

What are you going to use to calling card now Kieryn?

Kieryn:

I used to have a uterus, so I understand.

Eve:

You are no longer a walking womb.

Kieryn:

I'm no longer a walking womb.

Eve:

That should be on our merch.

Kieryn:

Yes, yes, yes.

Eve:

Former walking womb.

Kieryn:

Yes, former walking womb. Yeah. So it's like all of these levels... And I sent an email to my instructor towards the end of last semester, because I was dealing with that an ADHD and dehydrating myself, because of being trans and it was the end of the semester. So I was just stressed, and I couldn't concentrate, and I couldn't think, and I actually did not go the last week of school because my body needed it.

Kieryn:

And so I sent him this letter that was like, "All right, so this is what I'm looking at when I walk up to a lathe. Is, I have this entire context of educational neglect, being yelled at for asking questions, being told that I'm inherently bad at this because of my anatomy. And also, I'm terrified of using the bathroom on campus. Being on campus is hard for me because I'm trans, because nobody understands because I've been harassed in bathrooms on campus.

Kieryn:

So I'm not taking care of my body, which means my blood sugar drops, which means I get shaky, and it's hard to focus and this is not the state you should be operating heavy machinery by the way.

Eve:

Yeah.

Kieryn:

And so I just sent him that and was like, "This is everything that is around me when I step up to a machine, as I have to climb this mountain before I can make the cut on the metal."

Eve:

Yeah.

Kieryn:

And he was like, "Oh, I get it."

Eve:

Good.

Kieryn:

And he was really supportive and kind about it.

Eve:

I love good teachers. Watching good teachers just makes me feel so happy. Teachers that are passionate and excited about their students. My host mom in Kurdistan was a Russian teacher in our school, and she would go to bat for her students all the time. She loved them so much. The counterparts I worked with, Yildiz and Gulnaz, the way they cared about their students and bettering themselves so that they could be better teachers.

Kieryn:

Yeah.

Eve:

Denada AJ who's this like goddess of a woman who runs the [inaudible 00:44:06] level, basically teaches the older teachers professional development group, and coaching all of them. The enthusiasm and the joy that she brought to teaching and the compassion she brought to her students, it was so cathartic and

healing to be in that world. Where teaching is a gift you can give your students rather than an obligation-

Kieryn:

Something you have to do.

Eve:

Yeah. An obligation that is uncomfortable and you resent your student for needing help.

Kieryn:

Yeah. That's so foreign to me and so magic when I find it. It's also why really like community college because everybody in my experience, and I know this isn't universally true. But all of my teachers give many, many, many shits about their students and about making things better for them. And every time I've talked to any of them about things, they've always been super helpful, and they've gone to bat for me and I've always just been blown away by that. They care.

Eve:

As much as Grove City is a toxic fundamentalist wasteland in some ways, the professors there really made it for me, for the same reason, they really cared. Janice Brown and Colin Messer and Eric Potter and Andrew Harvey, the English department professors, James Dixon, the ones that I was able to take classes with, they were so kind to me, and they were so generous. And they really saw their teaching as a calling. It was like a ministry for them, a way to love people and to invest in other humans. And it was just so healing, the experience. Walking into the English suite with all these offices full of these wonderful people, felt like coming home.

Kieryn:

That's so good.

Eve:

It was so good. Anyway, cheers to good teachers and, I don't know what we'll talk about next week, but I just need to go-

Kieryn:

The teachers are good.

Eve:

I just need to go cry about all this now.

Kieryn:

I know. I know. I'm like, it's a lot.

Eve:

We're having a lot of feelings.

Kieryn:

Yeah.

Eve:

All right. Two former walking uterus's signing out.

Kieryn:

Yes. Check us out next week.

Eve:

Support us on Patreon. Follow us on Twitter.

Kieryn:

All the things. Yeah.

Eve:

Ask this questions.

Kieryn:

Yes, please ask questions.

Eve:

Bye.

Kieryn:

Bye.