

## The One with the Nightshades

- Tuberman** Belladonna, please try and stay in time. Thank the stars, Maddy, my night shades. You found them.
- Maddy** Tuberman, is that your voice I can hear choreographing those slick moves?
- Tuberman** Affirmative, you're watching a recording of the annual nightshade family dance. Once a year, we come together to unify our groove.
- Maddy** Wait a minute, you're related to a tomato? I thought you evolved from a crop of space potatoes.
- Tuberman** That is correct. All potatoes are a part of the nightshade family. As are tomatoes, eggplants, goji berries, chillies, and even capsicums.
- Maddy** Capsicums? Sorry, but you're blowing my mind here a little bit. I wouldn't have guessed you were related.
- Tuberman** We all wear these leaf hats when we're budding. It binds us as a family.
- Maddy** That's weird, Tuberman.
- Tuberman** What is weird? Is weird a favourable assessment?
- Maddy** When it comes to dancing, I think the weirder the better. What's with that little berry running around in circles screaming?
- Tuberman** That's Belladonna. She's the deadly nightshade.
- Maddy** She's hectic.
- Tuberman** That is correct. She is a dangerous woman. All of our leaf hats are toxic to ward off insects, but Belladonna is pure poison. All the way to her dark, dark core. Early humans used her to poison their arrows. She was used by enemies of the Empire to transform Roman emperors into quivering madmen. Shakespeare used her to kill Romeo and Juliet, and Macbeth. Women in Italy used her to widen their pupils. That's where her name comes from: Belladonna. It means beautiful lady.
- Maddy** It is a lovely name, Belladonna.
- Tuberman** Then all of the beautiful ladies realised Belladonna was slowly blinding them. and causing night terrors that haunted them during waking hours.
- Maddy** Not so lovely.

- Tuberman** Bella developed such a treacherous reputation that when Europeans started growing potatoes, tomatoes, and eggplants, they saw we all had the same toxic family hats and assumed we were poison to the core as well.
- Maddy** But, you're all so tasty.
- Tuberman** For years, we just dangled and rotted away like flowers in the spring rain. That's until people realised we were safe and nutritious, which just goes to show you, you can't always judge a nightshade by its hat.
- Maddy** I see. I still don't get the dancing.
- Tuberman** Sometimes we dance to remember. Sometimes we dance to forget. Sometimes we dance because it's the only family activity Belladonna seems to enjoy.
- Tuberman** Remember Maddy, you can choose your friends, but you can't choose your family.
- Lily** Alright Billy, show me what you got.
- Billy** Alright, I'm gonna start with a classic. You ready?
- Lily** Ready as I'll ever be.
- Billy** Alright. So what did the dad tomato say to the baby tomato when they were out on a family walk?
- Lily** What?
- Billy** Catch up.
- Lily** So the baby tomato is just walking along, then the dad tomato crushes it for being slow?
- Billy** Yes, that's the joke.
- Lily** Okay, so this baby tomato is just minding its own business, going at its own pace, trying to actually enjoy the walk their on, and then the dad tomato comes along and crushes it in the dirt for being slow?
- Billy** Yes.
- Lily** That's horrific.
- Billy** It's a pun.
- Lily** Have you even tasted ketchup? It's gross. Too sweet. Tomato relish is way better.
- Billy** What's that got to do with anything?