

THE STRAND THAT BEADS YOU

by
Allison Fradkin

Contact:
Allison Fradkin
allisonfradkin@aol.com

“The Strand That Beads You”

SYNOPSIS

Turquoise is a pony bead who won't get off her high horse. Magenta is a steed of a bead who doesn't hesitate to read her the riot act. And it's not just their colors that clash. Can Rainbow Heart, a charm who's both intrusive and inclusive, hang in there long enough to string these beads together?

CHARACTERS

TURQUOISE

a pony bead
cisgender female
open age
open ethnicity

MAGENTA

a pony bead
non-binary or genderqueer
open age
open ethnicity

RAINBOW HEART

a charm
transgender
open age
open ethnicity

SETTING

The arts-and-crafts station at summer camp.

TIME

The day before camp starts, the present.

At rise, pony beads MAGENTA and TURQUOISE are at the arts-and-crafts station at summer camp. Magenta is dancing (or, rather, rolling) around while Turquoise is playing with an unstrung strand of beads.

MAGENTA

(singing, to the tune of “Leader of the Pack” by The Shangri-Las) They found me at the crafting store / And brought me here to summer camp / Now get a bead on / the strand please / Arts-and-crafts is / the beader of the pack. *(speaking)* I cannot wait for camp to start tomorrow! I feel the need, the need to bead. Well, to *be* beaded. It might be kind of tough to—

TURQUOISE

If I end up ringing your necklace, I might end up wringing your—

MAGENTA

Hands? The way bracelets do?

TURQUOISE

Oh, I’ll be bracing myself for that.

MAGENTA

It’s always wise to make the proper preparations. The camp counselors certainly did. Look how organized we are!

TURQUOISE

You’re right about that. They’ve divided us by size, shape, color, style—but not, apparently, by sound.

MAGENTA

Well, I wouldn’t say we’re divided. Once the campers get their hands on us, we’ll be all mixed up. Glitter beads beside glow-in-the-dark beads, animal beads beside—

TURQUOISE

Okay, slow your roll there...

MAGENTA

Magenta. But you can call me Gent.

TURQUOISE

You’re a gent? A boy bead?

MAGENTA

It’s just a nickname. Actually, I’m—

TURQUOISE

I’m Turquoise. But you can call me Turqie. Because as you’ll quickly learn, I talk turkey. That means I tell it like it is.

MAGENTA

Even if you might hurt someone’s feelings?

TURQUOISE

Do you moonlight as a guided journal or something? Because feelings are for reading, not for beading. And I am not a woman of letters. I don’t even like alphabet beads.

MAGENTA

Really? I think alphabet beads are the spelling bee’s knees. I especially like “U.”

TURQUOISE

Cool it, Gent. We just met.

MAGENTA

I like the letter “U,” because it’s smiley-shaped. I hope a camper with a “U” in their name includes me on their name bracelet.

TURQUOISE

Name bracelets are for babies. And just look at those letters. They’re so square, whereas we’re well-rounded. Plus, I prefer uniformity.

MAGENTA

Not me! Who wants to be part of a bland strand when you can be part of a grand strand?

TURQUOISE

Not I! I am all about simplicity and tradition and sequence.

MAGENTA

I love sequins!

TURQUOISE

Not sequins, silly. Sequence! One thing, then another thing, then the first thing again, then the second thing again. And around and around we go.

MAGENTA

You’re talking in circles.

TURQUOISE

Exactly! The sequential is essential. Therefore, it is in our best interest to get along, since you and me—he and she—will probably end up next to each other. There’s no sequence more traditional than boy, girl, boy, girl.

MAGENTA

Wow, you’re really good at patterning your life after...patterns.

TURQUOISE

Thanks! I like to think of myself as a one-trick pony bead.

MAGENTA

That’s not the flex you think it is.

TURQUOISE

Good, because I am inflexible—unlike those trendy bendy wristbands that people put words on. Can you imagine being a part of something so...inspirational? “You Are Enough,” “Be Strong,” “Choose Kindness.” The only kind I’m choosing is my own kind. As the saying goes: Beads of a feather knock together. (*playfully nudges Magenta*)

MAGENTA

I hate to break it to you, Turqie, but if variety gives you anxiety, then you’re in the wrong place. Kids are so unique and aware and creative. I don’t know if you’re aware, but...they color outside the lines now. So not to yuck your yum and all, but I think authenticity is way more important than simplicity and uniformity.

TURQUOISE

TL;DB.

MAGENTA

Huh?

TURQUOISE

Too long; didn’t bead. And quit whining, would you? I don’t know if you’re aware, but...boys don’t vent, Gent.

MAGENTA

I never said I was a boy.

TURQUOISE

Oh, don’t tell me I misgenta’ed you.

MAGENTA

That’s heartless! Just wait ’til the counselors hear about this. You are so canceled!

(RAINBOW HEART CHARM enters. Internally and externally, Rainbow is the epitome of inclusivity.)

RAINBOW HEART

When there’s strife among the strands, my heart just skips a bead.

TURQUOISE

Excuse me, but this is a private cancellation. So mind your own beads-wax, okay?

RAINBOW HEART

Get off your high horse, Pony.

TURQUOISE

You can't hang with us, Charm. Not only would you weigh us down; you wouldn't align with our design.

RAINBOW HEART

What's wrong with the way I look?

TURQUOISE

Well, it's one thing to be a few colors short of a rainbow. It's another thing entirely to be a few colors...long of one. Aren't you, like, capped at seven?

RAINBOW HEART

Capped? What do you take me for, a marker? My colorfulness is limitless.

MAGENTA

And my gender is no offender! Everyone is beading material. You've got a lot to learn, Turqie. Forget summer camp. You need summer school.

RAINBOW HEART

She needs charm school.

MAGENTA

Yeah, ever thought about *enrolling*?

TURQUOISE

Hey! I am perfectly acceptable just the way I am. The other beads will back me up on this.
(*addressing a container of turquoise beads*) Won't you, my fellow wrist watchers?
(*Silence. Turquoise shakes the container.*)

Hello in there!

MAGENTA

Maybe they're afraid to speak up.

RAINBOW HEART

Or maybe they're nothing like you. On the inside, anyway.

TURQUOISE

I'll have you know we are all empty inside. I mean vacant. I mean open.

RAINBOW HEART

As in open-minded?

TURQUOISE

No, as in...open-ended.

RAINBOW HEART

That’s another word for limitless.

TURQUOISE

It is?

MAGENTA

You’re right about one thing, Turqie: You’re perfectly acceptable just the way you are.

TURQUOISE

Thank you.

MAGENTA

But you’re not perfectly *accepting* just the way you are.

TURQUOISE

Do I *have* to be?

MAGENTA

Don’t you *want* to be? What would you say if a turquoise bead and a magenta bead couldn’t “knock together”? That they had to be separated by a spacer bead because they’re not in a safe space? Or worse, what if Turquoise and Magenta couldn’t even sit at the same arts-and-crafts table because their colors clash?

TURQUOISE

I’d say that’s a raw deal. I’d say that’s an un-bead-able deal! I’d say (*singing, to the tune of “Let It Be” by The Beatles*) Let her bead / Let her bead / Let her bead / Let her bead / Any way she wants to / Let her bead.

RAINBOW HEART

Loving the limitlessness. However...while it’s true that all children should be seen and heard, it’s also true that not all children should be seen and...her’ed. Or she’ed.

TURQUOISE

Cut it out. You’re giving me the he-bead-jeebies.

MAGENTA

He doesn’t bead jeebies. He beads bracelets. And so do *they*! In fact, sometimes they—I—prefer key chains to bracelets. Hey, that’s exactly what you need, Turqie: a key change. Then you’ll be singing a different tune.

TURQUOISE

(*to Rainbow Heart*) Ugh, make him stop.

RAINBOW HEART

Anything for you, T.P.

TURQUOISE

That’s not my nickname.

RAINBOW HEART

Well, it should be. Your breed of bead is Turquoise Pony, right?

TURQUOISE

But T.P. stands for toilet paper! That’s not who I am!

MAGENTA

It’s a crummy feeling when someone calls you something you’re not, isn’t it? Like, if I were to call you Jerk-quoise instead of Turquoise, that would hurt your feelings, wouldn’t it? And I don’t want to do that.

TURQUOISE

I don’t want to be a jerk. I don’t want to be heartless either. T.P. doesn’t stand for Tin...Person. *(to Rainbow Heart)* This is all your fault, making me think and rethink and think again. You can’t spell “charm” without “harm.”

RAINBOW HEART

Sorry-not-sorry, Turqie, but in addition to being limitless, I am also harmless.

MAGENTA

She’ll never have a change of heart, will she?

RAINBOW HEART

She sure will. I could charm the bead off a bracelet.

TURQUOISE

But then I wouldn’t be included. Ugh, my chances of acceptance are hanging by a thread and the beading hasn’t even begun yet.

MAGENTA

I don’t know if you’re aware, but...it’s entirely possible to *(singing, to the tune of “Turn the Beat Around” by Vicki Sue Robinson)* turn the bead around! Learn to show acceptance!

RAINBOW HEART

Ditto. Next to arts-and-crafts, inclusivity is my favorite activity.

TURQUOISE

A bracelet united will never be divided! *(gasps)* Did I just say the quiet part out loud?

RAINBOW HEART

No, you said the best part out loud!

MAGENTA

(to Turquoise) You really mean it? You’re not just stringing us along?

TURQUOISE

That’s the job of the gir...of the *camper* who picks us.

MAGENTA

Look at you, all flexible, like a trendy bendy wristband with the admirable advice “Choose Kindness.” How does it feel?

TURQUOISE

Surprisingly spectacular. There’s even a certain...simplicity to it. Thanks, you two, for keeping me from making a mortifying bling blunder. Plus, you helped me realize I could accesso-rise to the occasion *and* take a shine to acceptance. I really am open-ended!

RAINBOW HEART

I heart you.

TURQUOISE

Careful, Magenta’s got *their* heart set on U.

MAGENTA and TURQUOISE

(singing, to the tune of “We Got the Beat” by The Go-Gos) We got the bead / We got the bead / We got the bead.

MAGENTA

(still singing) Yeah! I got you!

TURQUOISE

(speaking) I got you!

RAINBOW HEART

Oh, my friends. You work like a charm. *(belting—badly—to the tune of “Where Does My Heart Beat Now?” by Celine Dion)* Where does my heart bead now?

TURQUOISE

Right beside us.

RAINBOW HEART

Ooh, now *that* is on point.

MAGENTA

Not to mention on brand.

TURQUOISE

And perhaps most importantly...on strand.

The End.