

Dining With A Cursed Bloodline: The Biggest Little Sturm Und Drang

written by Andrea Lambert | April 29, 2019



I am furious. I am ferocious. My rage could devour the world. It is not appropriate to express. Other than to my therapist. For one hour. Once a week. Perhaps the page? This kindly publication? Although I rarely wear the bulletproof vest, there are many walls around me. Protective boundaries. To be in my presence takes an invisible VIP card. Temporary for the help. Sliced in half like a VISA at Barney's for those who cross me.

My lesbian fiancée used to be in a biker gang. Carries a knife. Looks like she could kill someone with her bare hands. Her biker tattoo is street code, she explains. She was kicked out at thirteen for homosexuality. The gang protected her. Until the church brought her in off the streets. That kind of survival skills I respect. Adapt to Nevada's new dangers. My lover is a strong asset. With her by my side? I feel new powers stir.

We walk together through Reno's mean streets. Run errands. Kratom for her Lupus. Dispensary for both of us. We are in a snow globe. Snap a smiling couple's selfie in front of the Reno arch. Black leather trench coat. Combat boots. Vintage leather gloves. In my recent "Apparel for Authors" interview I called this look: *The Matrix*. Trying to look tough and stay warm in the snow? Means lookin' mighty extra 'round these parts.

Street safety techniques learned from San Francisco serve me well: look down. Resting bitch face. Make eye contact with no one. Do not speak, especially if someone speaks to me. Stay aware of everything. Including the ever present surveillance cameras. The surveillance state can help me. If trouble is filmed? I know which camera? Useful.

Jasper and I stop for lunch at the Silver Legacy Resort Casino. Bewildering mirror walls of slot machines. A greeter in full Wild West getup. Waxed mustache and string tie. Directs us to the cheap food. Jasper insists upon paying. A Southern butch thing. I order french fries. Suck down savory potato goodness dipped in ranch. She gets a Club Sandwich and fries. Gives me a bite. White bread, mayonnaise and lunch meat. I don't tell her I don't like

it. I'm conditioned by my upbringing that feelings don't matter. Actions do. If you don't have anything nice to say, don't. Food is food.

Another day. I wake before dawn in her studio. Throw on warm weather leggings and a "Deal With the Devil" Wicked Clothes T shirt. No bra. Grab her key lanyard on my way out. Go down the hall to the communal restroom for my morning pee. Routine now. After four months together. My House of the Rising Sun is still my sanctuary. Our lingerie bondage love den, but my world is opening. Expanding. Blossoming into the reality of Reno outside my old money neighborhood. After what I've been through? How I used to live? Familiar as felines.

We stop at Jasper's favorite vegan café in her riverwalk neighborhood. Full of fascinating storefronts. Healthy café's. Casinos. Pawnshops. Head shops. Bespoke menswear boutiques. Because gentrification happens. After my habitual camera scan we relax onto a blue brocade couch. Review our promising Dispensary hauls. Order at the counter. I ask for Sweet Potato Fries and Tempura Zucchini with Sesame Dipping sauce. Jasper gets Kim Chi Tacos. She just got paid from the electric car factory.

When the food comes, I did not know Reno was capable of such a meal. The fried Sweet Potato and Zucchini are delectable. Crunchy. Nourishing. Health food in this land of gravy! I am overjoyed. Two piquant sauces to choose from. Sesame this and Sesame that. Pickles and Kim Chi on the side. A world away and down the block from the Silver Legacy's Freedom Fries.

"Broke hoes do what they can, Good girls do what they told, Bad bitches do what they want. That's why a bitch is so cold" sings Cardi B. I listen to her now instead of Lana Del Rey. I want her power. Driven up against a wall by my Psychiatric Disability. Multiple marginalized identities. Rural location. Visibility. I grow a mollusks hard shell. Not only on Reno streets, but in my finger's technology use and telephone voice in the sanctuary of home.

Over the last three years, my local pharmacy endangers my life countless times by withholding life saving psychiatric medication. A yearlong planned trip to attend and perform at the American Association of Writers and Writing Programs Conference is torpedoed by their incompetence. I can't travel sans antipsychotics. Hallucinating the Grim Reaper at the Portland Downtown Hilton? No bueno.

This business has the nerve to think a \$25 gift card "token settlement" will keep me from suing them. That won't even buy me a manicure where I come from. Do they really think a gallon of Dreyer's Slow Churned Caramel Delight could cool such fury? Quarts of Breyer's Cookies and Cream fix this magnitude of loss? To a writing career on life support? Gosh, I wonder why my EverybodyWiki was nominated for deletion this same month? Shucks, what a remarkable and duly noted coincidence?

While I speak with the corporate pharmacy representative I use polite, conciliatory language. This higher up tells me my file deems me "drug seeking," for attempting to obtain the medications I require to stay alive. I eat indignity in Salted Chocolate Rx Bars. Wash mortification down in gulps

of bitter cold black coffee. Elixir of the permanently sober. Psychiatric medication is a necessity for my life. Nevada's opioid crisis is not my problem. I've never taken an Oxycontin. Or any of those newfangled drugs I have to google. What even is a Fentanyl?

My combination of rare psychiatric diagnoses, Schizoaffective Disorder with chronic PTSD and anxiety, are one of the few for which lifelong benzodiazepines are a necessity. With many other non opioid psychiatric medications. All I did to incur this damning erroneous label was accidentally drop occasional non opioid pills on the bathroom floor with my motor control impaired hands. Every month. Over three years. Thus, slow accidental loss left me multiple weeks off from their official prescribing cycle. Routinely driven to near death in week long benzodiazepine withdrawals. Six times this year. If I wasn't an iron and leather cyborg of will? Accordingly to Wikipedia, Taking long term medical patients off of daily Klonopin after over a decade's prescription is a death sentence.

These poorly educated hicks have no concept of the breadth of my illnesses. Demand to speak to my psychiatrist with every single prescription. But gosh, in these three years they have never once been able to reach her by phone in California. Could it be these nimrods won't use the pharmacy land line long distance?

"I'm as cold as I have to be, it's what's kept me alive," says Lana Winters in *AHS: Asylum*. I walk through my parklike backyard under the stark apple trees. Cherry tree barren as my heart. When once were blossoms. Look down at the eyesore below.

"I want it torn down and the earth salted," says the Mother Superior in *AHS: Asylum*. I must agree. If further pharmaceutical issues lead to my death? My blood is on their hands. Every one of their employees: national corporate to regional branch. I shall haunt them and their descendants until the end of time. Latin curses in menstrual blood pentagrams in my bathtub. Incantations electrostatic on social media.

"They done messed with the wrong witch, and they know it," says Voodoo Queen Marie Laveau in *AHS: Coven*. I call upon the armies of darkness only when up against a wall. Never use physical violence. Do not own any weapons. Guns are for losers. I use my words.

Might want to call in a priest, though. Or at least sage the store. Prayer vigil? Stay off my lawn, Christians. Should I expect a mob with torches and pitchforks? I have an Apple Security Camera linked to my iPhone tracking any such invasions. The same iPhone on which all of your location trackers are summarily turned off. My tank top typing this reads, "They can't burn us all."

Tender reader, you may be wondering by now how I have not yet lost my mind. Gone on a mass shooting rampage like any normal red blooded, God fearing, beer drinking Nevadan. Or set my biker babe butch bitch on them? Good question. I have what these country folk do not, civilized self control. Trauma porn is for the page.

I was born genetically psychiatrically damaged in Los Angeles. My earliest memories are of playing with dolls in a psychiatrist's office. I am used to nightmares. Cruelty. Abuse. Gaslighting. No one believing me. Nothing making sense. No fault of my dear parents, but the outside world is cruel. It has been beaten into me to keep my cool regardless. Think before I speak. Or write. Question before reacting. Act appropriate. Be regular. Violence is never the answer. No matter what. There are greater powers at my disposal.

All I do is pray. "Invoca Satanas. Invoca mater lunae. Invoca custos manes. Liberate me ex dolore. Da mihi gratiam." Deliver me from pain. Give me grace. To accept the unacceptable. Move on. Eat my own soul for sustenance in the snow. Until only the abyss remains.