

Bryanna,

I'm sure on some level, you saw this coming. Maybe not in this exact way, it being uncreative and all, but we're writers, so it seemed fitting. I guess I'll say it now so I'm not leaving you on the edge of your seat but, I'm straight... up gay. Not bi (at least I don't think so), pan, queer, just plain ol' GAY. I bet right now you'll want to stop reading and say something to me, but don't, just keep reading because I guarantee you, I'm shitting myself watching you read this, if I have the guts to that is. Anyways, I'm sure you have questions and are probably wondering why I haven't told you sooner because you *have* made it a point that you wouldn't mind, especially since you can appreciate how pretty girls can be (I mean c'mon). But there's so many reasons I didn't say anything, and they outweighed the reasons I should have said something (and I hope this doesn't hurt you, it's the truth and I have to tell it). One, every time you or Mãe would ask or "reassure" me, I found no comfort because I wasn't ready, it was a push I didn't want (think "outed", I felt "outed"). I went into an insane Gay Panic (which I will show you posts I've saved over the years that perfectly encapsulates Gay Panic lol) and would literally dwell over it for weeks.

Two, our parents, all of them. Mãe says she'd love me regardless, but it won't be the same when I bring a girlfriend home as opposed to a boyfriend. She has a very subconscious, maybe subtle, overall harmless, homophobia (I don't even want to use that word, because she really isn't homophobic). Everything she has EVER said about the LGBTQ+ community, I have remembered; I have a literal archive in my brain. Once, she asked if I'd ever sleep in the same bed as a gay girl (like at a sleepover), and I said "yes", like a normal person, because it's not pervy and as long as we're both comfortable, we'd be fine. Do you know what she said? She said "No, I wouldn't." That's it. That's all she said. And it was enough. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Also, you remember when she used "gay" as a synonymous word for "annoying"? [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I've never felt more invalidated [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

██████████ The anger you showed that day over a *word*, that was the reassurance I sought, and it reminded me that I love you. ██████████

██████████ Another reason? Marc. Need I say less? Another reason? Pai. I really think he'll be weirded out. Probably blame it on the fact that I needed a man in my life or father figure and that's why I like girls. He's lowkey Republican too, so I guess we'll see how that plays out. Doesn't matter (but it *does*), he isn't walking me down the aisle, Mãe is.

Let's bring it back to Mãe, this time, something simultaneously reassuring and not so reassuring. One day when we were out, we saw a lesbian couple eating dinner. She kept looking at them and said to me, "Is it just me, or do gay couples look like they love more?" Needless to say, I was taken aback. I responded, which queued my Gay Panic again, "They probably do. I don't know. They love like they have something to lose." And we do. I won't bother giving you the history, you're educated. Anyways, I wasn't ready to "lose" anything. I wasn't ready to constantly have my future marriage questioned, to come out every day to new people, to have literal institutions tell me I'm a sin. Because I'm not and it took so long to come to terms with that. Back to Mãe; she thought what I said must have been profound or something, because she agreed with me, and felt horrible that people have to live that way. Do you see my struggle with Mother?

I don't know what else to say. I'm sure you're tired of reading by now and just want to address me in person, but this is years in the making. Did I know when I was little? Nope. I had a hint when high school started. 14 years old maybe. It was all hell. High school was literally taken from me, BY me. I hate that. I hate that I blame others but really, I took the coward's way out. I can't even say it out loud to you. It's beyond infuriating. I can't even to begin to explain how much I wanted to wear a suit to prom, or paint a rainbow on my pep rally jeans, or literally just be a high school student that didn't constantly have to prove her straightness.

I originally planned on telling you last year, and multiple times after that. Blurt it out at dinner with the Ladies. ██████████

██████████ Buy a cake and write it out with icing. Once I whispered it the night we went to town with the ladies and had gelato and spoke in British accents. I wished someone heard it, so I didn't need to say it at an appropriate octave and with gut. Oh, telling the ladies should be interesting.

I guess I'm done. I've wanted to get to a point in my life where I can literally breathe. Because if you're curious to what being in the closet feels like, its suffocating. That's why it's a closet, it so fucking small air can't get in. I kid you not, my life starts after this. I need to figure out what part of me was ME and what part was Straight Barbara; because they're *different*. And I'm sorry I've been lying for so long, I feel guilty? No need to unpack that.

[REDACTED]

Go ahead, ask me anything. I don't think I can ever keep another secret from you again.
Final words: I love you and women are ~beautiful~.

Your ride or die,
Barbara