

Brandon Gets His Big Break

Chapter Four

By

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Brandon Speaking

It was Sunday morning, the second day of the of *The 2023 Frogtown Art Walk*: this was an important thing to our polyam clan. The fact that it was a community-based art event made it inherently cool. However, it was Amy's personal connection to *The Elysian Valley Arts Collective* that made it so very important to us. Its value to us really came from Amy's love of it. Her connection was simply so much greater than some person's love for a public celebration of the arts. Her mom – Doris - was a founding member of the Collective. Prior to this, Doris was...difficult. Her brief involvement with the Collective brought out a sweetness in her. It did not last.

I was eating breakfast. Jim and Jane were on clean-up duty. They were both in the kitchen cleaning the omelet pans and the soiled utensils. They were bickering about something. And, while I wasn't following it, I knew it was the adorable bickering that two romantic partners engaged in while cleaning omelet pans and the soiled utensils.

"Hi, Sweetie!", Amy chirped. I looked up to see her standing next to me. She leaned down and kissed me gently on the lips and then my forehead.

She sat down behind her plate.

"I love you!", She said enthusiastically.

"I love you, too.", I said as I gave her shoulder a rub. "I was about to come and get you. Your omelet is getting cold."

"I was cleaning up. Such a complex process!", She said with sweet sarcasm as she made an exaggerated eyeroll.

"Hey, I'm sorry about last night. I was an asshole."

"What do you mean?", She said as she separated a bite from her omelet with her fork.

"Well...you had just woken up and I got all heavy. You know...how I thought your personality had changed after you became part of our family."

"Yeah...How did you put it? I went from 'intense and gruff' to 'open and loving'."

"Yeah...You were half asleep. And that was just a really fucking weird thing for me to say."

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“No, it wasn’t weird. It was true. I became happy...and I mean truly happy...when I became part of you guys. It was the first time that I was embraced by unconditional love *in a long time*. This relationship was the best thing that ever happened to me. You guys saved me. I love you.”

She looked up and shouted towards the kitchen:

“I LOVE YOU GUYS!”

“We love you guys!”, Jim and Jane replied in semi-unison.

Amy laughed and waved at them.

She looked at me and said:

“I’m grateful for last night. You reminded me of how lucky I am. I don’t want to forget that.”

I started to speak but she gently put her hand over my lips.

“I know that I’ve told you about this before. But there is reason that I have this strong connection with the Art Walk and the Collective. Mom was such an evil cunt. She got really cruel when she realized that I was queer. But...then she got involved with the Collective. I saw her hanging out with the other people from the Collective. She was so sweet. And...I might be wrong...but I feel that she mellowed with me...if only briefly. I thought that they were having a positive influence on her. Then she started spitting on me and hitting on me again.”

“I’m sorry”, I said.

“What...aren’t you listening? I’m happy now. And the Collective showed me what mom could have been like...decent. Sadly, it didn’t last.”

“Now...why do you think your mom lightened up while dealing with the Collective?”

“I never understood that. Honestly, I thought they got her away from her bullshit church. But...that wasn’t it. Now...I never gave up on Jesus. There is one God. I believe that Brandon. But [God is Love](#). When I got involved with the Hollywood United Methodist Church, I found a community that saw Him the way that I do. My family...my church. Those are my two pillars, motherfucker.”

She said ‘motherfucker’ with such sweetness, and not the harshness normally associated with that word, that I had to laugh. I wasn’t laughing at her: she simply made me feel good. And she did that a lot. She clearly understood that. She smiled.

We shifted the tone and lightened things up. In a moment, Jane and Jim joined us.

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In 2008, Doris made a discovery that made her realize that her daughter - Amy - was truly lost. It was a poster – *a pop culture poster* – that was taped up in her room. It simultaneously celebrated both the occult and lesbianism.

The vile poster was from the Satanic TV show *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*. The program was well made (because Satan was both pure evil and very competent). It taught young impressable children – and this was a good example of the Devil’s ability to twist reality – that one could fight evil by embracing the occult. In the show, a specific woman (Buffy) is chosen to be a messianic figure who fights evil by killing vampires and other devilish beings. The truth was that a woman was mandated by the Lord to silently submit to men on matters of faith (*1 Corinthians 14:34-35*). The show did not merely lie about the facts but conned children!

The poster was a still from that showed two characters Willow and Tara (acolytes of the evil Buffy) sitting cross-legged on a bed: they were holding hands. Both actresses were undeniably attractive young women, and those fetching looks was a part of Satan’s grand plan to corrupt the young. Not only were they witches but lesbians!

As she contemplated the demonic poster, she realized that she – as a spiritual but simple woman – had misinterpreted [Proverbs 6 16-19](#). It spoke of the Lord hating people who *soweth discord among brethren*. Clearly, it was talking about the makers of this vile program. And homosexuals! Those perverts thwarted God’s plan for marriage (based upon a woman’s true nature) as discussed in [Genesis 2:18-25](#) and that sowed discord. So, [Leviticus 20:13](#) made perfect sense!

It was so clear to her now!

Her child was fully under the control of the vile Dark Lord...Satan. Her duty as a good Christian mother was clear. She had to rip her young child from the wicked grip of the Beast. A half measure was not acceptable. If she did not fully engage Devil in what was about to be an epic struggle for her daughter's soul, she would be a false Christian...a cancer on The Body. A false Christian might claim to be follower of Christ. But her words were hollow: her actions did reflect their words. This falseness was shown by hypocrisy.

Hypocrisy was the act of claiming to be of The Body but not conforming. Doris understood. To be a good Christian, *she had to conform to others*. Her child was under the spell of Satan. She also remembered that [Proverbs 6:19](#) told her that the Lord hated ‘a false witness that speaketh lies’.

She said that she conformed to the instruction of her Pastor...her Shepherd fully. If she did not subjugate herself to these men, she would be a liar, and the Lord would hate her.

She realized that the Lord did not hate her but was testing her. She simply needed to conform.

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If she did not steer her daughter away from 'Buffy', she would be in league with the makers of the show who were – under the guidance of Satan – spreading discord among The Body. That would make her a false witness and *then* the Lord would hate her because she would be an abomination.

Doris refused to earn the wrath of the Lord!

Her daughter - her 13-year-old girl - was a lesbian.

Doris now understood. Since her daughter was a lesbian, the child was frustrating the Lord's plan for marriage – a godly marriage between a man and a woman – which is the foundation for a godly society. So, the Lord currently hated her daughter for allowing herself to be tricked by *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* into becoming a lesbian. If she did not make her daughter turn away from both lesbianism and 'Buffy' then she would be a false witness and the Lord would find them both to be abominations!

She had suspected for some time that Amy was gay. But now *she knew*.

Doris knew that lust was a sin: one of the seven deadly sins. Lust was the harbinger of Satan. It was a sin because it was a desire for something that was not to be had by a godly woman. Sexuality was the bond between a man and a woman in the confines of a godly marriage. And the Bible taught that the wife's role in relation to her husband was to be his helper. A woman did not lessen herself by subjugating herself to men. It elevated her.

Genesis 2:18 told her that God said:

It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.

And [1 Corinthians 14:34-35](#) told her that a woman had to subjugate herself to *all* men.

Her Pastor...her Shepherd had explained to her that the Hebrew word for "helper" is *ezer*: the word meant 'one who helps'. The wife was not inferior to the husband. She had a unique role in helping her husband fulfill his God-given purpose. It might seem that the woman was making herself inferior to her husband but was – in fact – making herself his equal. Healthy, Christ-ordained, sexuality was integral to God's plan. Lesbianism was a perversion that denied God's plan.

And if her daughter did not turn from her perverted lust, she would not be a man's helper.

Doris knew that the scourge of the twenty-first century was half-hearted Christianity. And half-hearted Christianity would not save her daughter from lesbianism. When fighting the Devil, and Christians were forever at war with forces of darkness, half-hearted measures were never satisfactory. Such weakness was never acceptable: especially in these times. *James 1:8* flashed in her mind:

He is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

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Then she thought of something her Pastor...her Shepherd once said about that verse. The word for double-minded literally means 'two souls'. Here's a person trying to embrace both ways at the same time. The verse described a man trying to live with one foot in the church and one in the world. He was just enough of the world to know that he couldn't be happy in the church and with just enough Christ in him to know that he couldn't be happy in the world. Such a person is a spiritual schizophrenic...a two-soul person.

If she did not instruct her daughter on the grand delusion of *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* – which led her into becoming a marriage-destroying lesbian – then she would be a spiritual schizophrenic.

There could be no half-hearted measures: she would have to beat the perverted lust out of her daughter.

Screaming at and slapping her demon spawn proved ineffective. If these were more enlightened times, she would strip her child naked and whip her until the girl was a bloody mess. Or until her precious Amy declared her love for Jesus Christ and embraced heterosexuality. But the times were not enlightened. *No longer*. The State – an evil tool of the Devil just like 'Buffy' – would have her arrested for 'child abuse'...for instructing her daughter in Godly Truth. Satan's machinations were everywhere.

She could not leave marks. She would have to harshly admonish her child to be silent.

"Uh...Hi momma.", Doris swung around from the evil poster that was taped up in her daughter's room and saw her child standing half in the room. With her hind foot still in the hall – and her body's weight resting on it – Amy's eyes were wide open and expressed fear. Doris recognized the fear and appreciated it. The wayward soul feared the retribution of Christ.

"Well...come in. All the way in.", Doris said as calmly as possible. She was struggling to maintain composure. She knew that God's Will was acting through her. But she had to be as calm as possible until the child was within arm's reach.

Amy continued into the room with hesitancy. Her bookbag – big enough to hold some schoolbooks and supplies – was slung over one shoulder. She took it off and gently placed it on the floor. Her movements were very deliberate. It was as if the bookbag was filled with explosives that would detonate if jostled.

Doris placed her hands on her hips and inhaled deeply. She expelled the breath through her mouth. She was centering herself. But she would never use a term like 'centering'. That was yoga and that was as [satanic as a Ouija board](#). Yoga, while deceptive in its apparent harmlessness, were evil moves that were consciously designed to place the practitioner in a demonic trance.

Doris was still doing her best to project calm. She sat on Amy's bed and immediately jumped back up.

"Momma...are you alright?", Amy asked nervously.

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“Why ‘momma’? I mean...don’t get me wrong...there’s certainly nothing wrong with it. And there’s so much evil in the world...so much ugliness, the absence of our savior, Jesus Christ. ‘Momma’ is actually pretty.”, Doris placed her hands on her hips again. She repeated the centering breath. “Usually, it’s ‘mom’...or, occasionally, ‘mama’. Occasionally...it’s ‘momma’. Except for you, I’ve never heard anyone say that.”

“Oh...ah...I guess I just picked it up somewhere.”

“You picked a lot of things up...didn’t you?”, Doris’ demeanor changed. The question was accusatory, and her voice became brittle and dark. Her brows furrowed.

“I’ll stop using it.”, Amy said. She looked lost for a moment. “Um...yeah...I can use different words...‘mom’...‘ma’...whatever you like. I...I...want you to be happy, mom.”

“As I said, ‘momma’ is pretty. I want you to keep using it. But you are doing a lot of things that aren’t pretty. Your hair...”, Doris pointed to Amy’s head.

Amy had short hair. It was a little more than a buzz cut. Her hair had been shoulder length. She came home a couple weeks ago with the cut.

“I know and I’m sorry. Really...really...I swear. I was stupid, mom. I’m sorry. It’s the fashion...I guess.”

“What does [Deuteronomy 22:5](#) say about a woman trying to look like a man? When you came home...”, Doris waved abstractly at Amy’s head. “...and we had our little talk. I told you to memorize and be ready to repeat it on command. What does the verse say?”

““A woman must not wear men’s clothing, nor a man wear women’s clothing, for the Lord your God detests anyone who does this.”

A memory of something that happened recently flooded Amy’s mind. This was a tense moment and she had to stay in the present. She pushed it away.

Nonetheless, she flashed on her and her girlfriend Linda.

Linda, for her part, had liberal parents: they wouldn’t care if they found out that their daughter was gay. She knew Amy’s mom was a loon.

Amy flashed on the last time that she spoke to her girlfriend. It was only moments ago.

After making love in Linda’s room, they were walking down the suburban street where her house was located. When they got to the corner, Amy spoke.

“Well...this is my street. Thanks for walking me to the corner.”

“Sure.”

“I think that you are special.”

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"I think you are special."

They would exchange 'I love you' in private but were concerned about being overheard on the street.

After both made furtive glances in each direction, they nervously 'air kissed'. As Amy walked away, she was flooded with giddy happiness. She pictured the poster that was hanging in her room.

The faces of the actresses were replaced by her face and Linda's. She softly recited the line of dialogue that was printed on the poster:

We're In Love. Lovers. We're Gay Lesbian-Type Lovers.

She smiled broadly and her eyes shone brightly as she walked past the next few houses.

She readjusted her bookbag that started to slip off her shoulder. She considered her house which was now across the street. Her happiness disappeared and was replaced by dread. Her face darkened.

Doris was pleased by Amy's recitation of Deuteronomy 22:5 and its righteous denunciation of cross dressing. Perhaps there was hope for her child.

"Good...good. But it seems that you are going out of your way to look like a boy.", Doris again waved abstractly at her daughter. "Denim...white T-shirt...sneakers. If you didn't have breasts, I would assume that you're a boy."

"I'm sorry...I really, really, am sorry."

"Yes...you are sorry. You are turning your back on Jesus. You are turning your back on Him to embrace Satan."

"I'm sorry...mom. I'll start wearing dresses again. I'll grow my hair out. If you like, I can wear a wig until it grows out..."

"A wig...A WIG...A WIG!!", The first time Doris said the phrase it was conversational. The second time, it was an outraged shout. The third time was a red-faced scream at the top of her lungs: she began to advance on Amy.

Amy fell to her knees. She protected her face with her open palms:

"Mom! Please don't slap me again! Please!"

Doris stepped back, and after repeating her little centering ritual (two breaths this time), she continued as calmly as she could:

"Slap you? That isn't doing any good...is it? You are turning to the Devil, dear. Your physical body will wither and turn to dust. Your immortal soul will forever burn in hell."

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Doris then turned towards the evil poster that made her realize that heightened action was needed to instruct her daughter and make her right with Jesus.

“What is this?”

Um...a poster. It's from a TV show...mom...that's all.”

“A TV show...that's all”, Doris said this to herself. She was looking at the poster. Amy was behind her. She abruptly swiveled and faced Amy. She addressed her.

“A TV show...A TV SHOW...A TV SHOW!!!”, Doris' demeanor followed the same trajectory as a moment ago. The first time was conversational. The second time was an outraged shout. The third time was a red-faced scream.

Doris did not advance on Amy this time. She stood her ground in front of the poster. She repeated her centering ritual (three breaths).

Amy fell again to the ground. This time she was not on her knees. She was sitting on her left haunch. Her left arm extended back and contacted the floor, steadying her. This was the worst it had ever been. She realized that her mother could very likely end up killing her.

She thought to herself:

Why can't I cool it? I just can't. I'm driven to do things that freakout this fucking lunatic. And...if she knew about the stuff that I've been doing with Linda.”

With a level of deadpan calm that shocked both of them, Doris said:

“Are you a lesbian?”

“I...ah...um...I...um...”

“It's a simple question, dear. Are you engaging in godless sex with girls?”

Amy opened her mouth, but nothing came out.

Doris turned back to the poster:

“Who are these women?”

Um...Willow and Tara...they're characters on this TV show.”

“I know it. That show is of Satan, dear.”

“No...mom. It's just...um...silly.”

“And what are they?”

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“Well...”

“I know the answer. Just say it.”

“They’re...Ok...they’re witches. But...it’s silly...It’s nothing...it’s like a comic book.”

“Comic books are just another tool of the Devil.”

Doris had been deadpan for a while. But a dark, almost imperceptible, menace crept into her voice. Amy, still on the floor, pulled her body back with her arms. She ended up against the wall. She started to cry.

Doris had been slowly advancing on Amy. She was now a few feet away from her daughter.

“They are more than witches. What else are they?”

Amy shrugged. She was red-faced and bawling uncontrollably.

Doris regained her deadpan calm:

“Yes...cry...dear. That is healthy. We are fighting the Devil for your soul.”, Doris looked back and gestured towards the bottom of the poster. “What does that say?”

Amy couldn’t respond. She was not bawling anymore but was heaving. Her whole body was spasming. At that moment, she was certain that death was imminent.

“Oh... I can read it.”, Doris said. “It says ‘We're in love. Lovers. We're gay lesbian-type lovers.’.”

Amy thought:

What compelled me to bring that into the house? I’m as crazy as she is. Maybe...she’s right. Maybe, I am possessed. No...no...fuck that. She’s the lunatic. Not me. And if anyone is possessed...But why do I do this shit?

Doris was quiet for a moment. She allowed Amy a moment for her thoughts. She hoped that her daughter was finally turning to the Lord. She picked up a folding chair that was nearby and repositioned it near Amy. She sat down and said softly:

“Are you a lesbian?”

Amy said nothing. She was praying.

Doris got up and violently threw the folding chair to the side. She grabbed Amy by the collar of her t-shirt. She pulled her daughter up and pressed her against the wall. She then placed her free hand around Amy’s throat and pushed in towards the wall. Amy started to choke and struggle. She grabbed Doris’s arm and tried to break her grip. She couldn’t.

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Doris broke her grip. She was spent.

“Dear...I am fighting for your immortal soul. I can’t leave marks. You see...the State is evil. It is a tool of the Devil. It would arrest me for ‘child abuse’. And for what? All I am doing is instructing my daughter in the Godly Truth. But Satan...his machinations are everywhere.”

Doris walked around a bit, looking distracted. Amy wondered if she should say something.

Doris let out a guttural scream. She grabbed Amy by one of the child’s arms. She pulled her child out of the room, across the hall, and towards the bathroom.

Amy wondered if she should resist. Should she kill her mother in self-defense? Doris was a large, beefy, woman, at least three times the size of her slight 13-year-old frame. Amy was a small girl. With one arm, her mom shook her little body like a colicky baby would shake a rag doll. This was the first time that Amy encountered a truly insane person. She speculated that her mother would break her neck if she resisted.

Doris pulled Amy into the bathroom. She pushed the child to the floor. Amy’s head hit the hard linoleum. She turned to her side and rested her body on one of her upper arms. With her free hand, she felt the back of her head. She was not bleeding. But she had a dull headache. She struggled to get up. As she did so, the overhead light came to life. When she was on her knees, she felt a hand take hold of her upper arm. It pulled her up. Doris grabbed the child roughly. She held the child by her shoulders and tightened her grip. The woman was a behemoth and towered over her.

She shook Amy roughly and caused her head to snap back and forth.

“I am fighting for your soul!”, the woman bellowed. “You must resist Satan! You must! I love you!”

She positioned Amy in front of the toilet and forced her to her knees. Bending forward, she wrenched one of her daughter’s arms behind her back. With her other hand, Doris cupped the underside of the child’s chin: she pulled Amy’s head back.

“Are you a lesbian?”

Before Amy could say anything, the mother pushed her face into the toilet water. Amy struggled. After a time, she pulled Amy’s face out of the bowl. Amy was gasping for air.

“Are you a lesbian?”

She plunged her child’s face into the water again. After pulling Amy’s head up, she fought for breath. Finally, she screamed:

“Mom! You’re killing me!”. Amy looked to the sky and pleaded. “Help! Help!”

“God only helps those who help themselves. Are you engaging in godless sex with girls?”

She pushed Amy’s face into the bowl. This time was much longer.

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She pulled Amy's face out and said nothing.

Amy struggled to breathe. The muscles of her upper body were paralyzed. She was, at that moment, incapable of thought. Imagery from a recent news cast flooded her awareness. It was the story of a graveyard shift employee at an area convenience store. An altercation broke out between the guy and some unknown assailant. During the struggle, the attacker got hold of a carafe of hot coffee. He poured the scalding liquid down the employee's back: he crashed the empty glass container across the man's face. While the guy was on the ground, he cut the man's throat and gouged his eyes out with a large knife that he apparently brought with him. No money was taken. The story was followed by a block of commercials which was then followed by a lost dog story.

Amy did not remember specifics or context. But the images flooded her brain. While devoid of context, she subconsciously acknowledged humanity's casual cruelty. While no longer capable of thought, she knew that she was going to die. Suddenly her upper body muscles loosened. A violent and desperate breath – painful and intense – racked her body. In that moment, she was only aware of that involuntary last-ditch attempt at life. She suddenly slumped forward and her breastbone hit the edge of the commode. This knocked the air – that she fought to collect – out of her.

She rolled onto the floor and onto her back. Her entire body spasmed as it pulled in a series of breaths.

Ahhh!...Ahhh!...Ahhh!

Awareness returned. Her mother was standing above her.

Doris watched her with a calculating dispassion.

After she was finally able to speak, Amy screamed with a pitched mixture of terror and panic as she laid on her back and stared at mother:

"I'm not a lesbian! I'm not a lesbian! I'm a good girl! I swear! Mom...I love Jesus!"

Doris centered herself with several deep breaths. She was spent and spoke with resignation:

"I didn't make dinner. We'll go to that buffet that you like. Get cleaned up. We're leaving in 20 minutes."

Doris started towards the door.

After a couple steps, she said without looking at Amy:

"You don't tell anyone about this. If you lose your composure at the buffet...that will be a problem. Can you maintain?"

She looked back at Amy who was now sitting upright on the floor. She was red-faced and wiping a tear away. With effort, the child nodded.

Doris continued out. As she left the bathroom, she said:

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“And wear a dress.”

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