

Did I Say Something Wrong

By C. Jade Wyton

Becky is supposed to be meeting her aunt for lunch. But she's anxious about it. Very anxious... her aunt isn't exactly the most politically correct person. Sure, the woman is trying to be good; but she's still got a long way to go. And when they finally go into the restaurant and the first words out of her aunt's mouth are extremely inappropriate, Becky finds herself in a very stressful situation.

Contains racism and mentions of abuse.

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It was a beautiful day.

Birds were flitting about town, singing their songs. Fluffy white clouds hung in the bright blue sky. Flowers were blooming all over. And people bustled about the strip mall, going about their business even more than usual.

It was just a shame Becky was feeling so damn *anxious*.

She'd agreed to meet her aunt Isabel at the local takeout place, Auntie Yuan-Ti's, and had been waiting for about ten minutes, now, sitting in the gutter in front of the restaurant.

Isabel was late, and Becky hated that it had given her time to overthink the outing.

*Why* had she suggested they eat here?!

Isabel could *barely* behave herself in front of Jareth, let alone poor old Mama Hissha.

It might have been easier to meet at home— Ugh, *no*. It wouldn't have been....

Becky's dad had already seemed shocked enough to know she was meeting Isabel *in town* instead of going up to Warm Waters to see her. She was scared for a moment that he was going to turn around and tell her that she wasn't *allowed* to see her aunt.... But then he'd taken a deep breath, and told her to be safe, and let her go without too big a fuss....

Next time, she would go up and see her aunt in Warm Waters. That seemed easier. Even though her aunt had offered to come down because it "wasn't fair" on Becky to be the one to have to make the long drive. Becky didn't think the stress was worth it—

Don's tongue ran over Becky's cheek, and she was distracted from her thoughts by the glob of slobber that almost dripped into her mouth.

'Oh— Don— *Good boy*,' Becky sighed, wiping her face on her sleeve and giving the mimic a gentle pat. 'Good boy. Thank you.'

Don gave a honk and nuzzled Becky affectionately.

As he did, a beat up old car that looked older than most of the members of the Historical Society pulled into the street.

It sputtered to a stop in a parking spot just a little bit down from where Becky sat— And then Isabel's head popped out the window, and she waved enthusiastically at her niece.

‘BECKY!’ she greeted, loud enough to draw the attention of onlookers as she stumbled out of her car and almost knocked herself down closing the door. ‘Hi, honey! Have you been waiting long? I’m so sorry I’m late, there were ducks on the road! *Ducks!* I didn’t want to hit the poor little things so I pulled over. Then I got a little bit distracted watching them. Sorry about that. But— I’m here! And you’re here! And we’re gonna have a *fantastic* time!’

Becky was now in Isabel’s arms, barely on her toes as the woman hugged her so tight she was lifted into the air. ‘Hey, Auntie,’ Becky managed. ‘It’s good to see you.’

‘It’s good to see you, too!’ Isabel gave Becky a kiss on her cheek before letting her back down onto the ground. ‘Ah! I just can’t *wait* to have lunch with you! I’m so excited! Is this it?’

Becky didn’t have time to answer, as Isabel turned and walked in— All she could do was follow her aunt into the shop, give the yuan-ti at the counter a friendly wave, and pray that Isabel didn’t say anything too terrible—

‘This place is very oriental,’ Isabel said, a little too loudly. ‘It’s not spicy, is it?’

‘It— It is,’ Becky blushed so hot she was sure her skin matched Don’s as she slunk towards the counter. She couldn’t bare to look Ssssarah in the eyes as the yuan-ti watched Isabel with a tight, unimpressed look. ‘*I’m so sorry,*’ she whispered. ‘*She’s my aunt.*’

‘Oh, my. I’ve never handled spice well,’ Isabel tutted as she stepped to Becky’s side and smiled at Ssssarah. ‘Hello there. Do you have anything that’s not too spic— Oh my lord, your hands are heads!’

‘*Auntie!*’ Becky exclaimed, her voice breaking and her eyes going wide.

‘Auntie, I— Okay. No. No, that’s—’ Becky grabbed her aunt by the arm and dragged her towards the door. ‘Ssssarah I’m so sorry! I’m so so sorry!’

‘Oh— O-Oh! Did I say something wrong?’ Isabel asked as Becky pushed her into the street. ‘I’m— Oh, dear. Was it the— The hand thing? Is that not something I’m supposed to comment on? Oh, I’m sorry! I’m—’

The shop door opened, and Becky whirled around to see Ssssarah holding Don out to her.

‘Oh my god, Don!’ Becky exclaimed, taking Don from the yuan-ti. ‘Thank you— Thank you, Ssssarah!’

‘He fell of your sssshoulder,’ Ssssarah commented, before giving Isabel a frown and vanishing back into her store.

‘Oh my, it *was* the hand thing, wasn’t it?’ Isabel sighed, her shoulder’s slumping. ‘Oh, not even two minutes and I’ve already blurted something terrible!’

‘Maybe, just. Like. Take two seconds to think of what you’re going to say, *before* you say it,’ Becky’s brow furrowed as she rubbed it in frustration; *god, she sounded just like Isa.*

Was *this* how her family felt when *she* said stupid things?

Isabel winced as Becky gave a heavy sigh. Then, she rubbed her arms awkwardly and cleared her throat. ‘I, uh. Hope I didn’t cause any... issues... between you and that place.’

‘I mean— Probably?’ Becky tried to keep her tone even, and focused her attention on helping Don balance on her shoulder. ‘My ex girlfriend apparently started hurling slurs at them, at one point. So it’s, like. The *second* person they’ve

seen me with who's been rude to them. They're gonna think I'm like, a racist or something!'

'Oh— No! I'm so sorry!' Isabel gasped, and reached for the door. 'Oh, should I go in and apologise—'

'No!' Becky said, blocking her aunt off and hurriedly turning her in the other direction. 'Just give Sssarah time to cool off and then *I'll* let her know you're sorry! Did you *see* how mad she was?! If you say anything else she might *choke* you!'

'I had a boyfriend do that once,' Isabel blurted, mindlessly. 'Not in a sexual way, or anything— He was just like that.... Your mother broke his nose when she found out. Did she ever tell you about that?'

'No?' Becky's voice broke as she paused trying to stuff her aunt back in her car. 'Mum broke a guy's nose?'

'Oh, yes! She did!' Isabel beamed. 'We were still in high school, at the time, and when she found out he was hitting me, she cornered him on his walk home with one of the softball bats from the gym and just—' Isabel made a swinging motion. '*Crack!* Right across his face!'

Becky just stared, too stunned to reply.

Her mother hit a boy with a *bat*?!

*Why* had she never heard about this until now?!

'That was, of course, right before I got the abortion,' Isabel said, tapping her chin. Then, she chuckled. 'But— Oh— Don't mention *that* to anyone! My parents *still* don't know about it and I think Dad might actually *kill* me if he found out!'

Becky couldn't believe Isabel was *laughing*.

She was talking about horrible, terrifying abuse and just— Laughing it off like it was nothing.

*Like it was just something normal....*

'Your mother helped me with the abortion, too, actually!' Isabel continued— Then, her voice fell into a more sombre tone, and she gave a sigh. 'She *always* looked after me. And then I... didn't do the same for her....'

Becky saw her aunt's hand tighten into a fist around the fabric of her dress, squeezing tight until her knuckles paled— Then, she let out a breath and relaxed.

'I have a lot of stories about your mother, if you'd like to hear them,' Isabel offered.

'I... yeah,' Becky managed. 'I'd like that a lot, actually.'

'Ooh! Like the time there was a beehive in the backyard, and she got me to stick my hand in it—'

'Oh dear god, there are *two* of you now?!' a familiar voice laughed from behind Becky, and she spun around to face Orson. 'Hey there Becky. And hey there... older Becky.'

'Oh! Hello! I'm Isabel!' Isabel beamed, climbing out of her car and offering Orson her hand. 'It's nice to meet you, I'm Becky's aunt! Oh, you're a *drow*! Are you one of Isa's relatives?'

'Uh...' Orson paused for a second, before giving a wicked grin. 'Hah! Sure. Why not?'

'No!' Becky exclaimed. 'No— Isabel, just because he's a drow doesn't mean he's related to all other drow in town!'

‘Nah, just most of them!’ Orson joked.

‘Orson!’ Becky gave a huff. Then reached up to pet Don as he licked her cheek again. ‘Don’t *mess* with her!’

‘Why not?’ Orson gave a laugh. ‘I mess with *you* all the time!’

‘Yeah but we’re *friends*, it’s different,’ Becky sighed. ‘Isabel, this is Orson. He’s a friend. *Just* a friend. Not a relative.’

‘Oh, okay,’ Isabel gave Becky a confused, almost vacant, look, before turning back to Orson and squinting at the colourful badges and pins he wore. ‘Ask... me... about... my... weasel...’ she read. ‘Ask you about your weasel? You have a weasel?’

Orson grinned wide, reaching into his sleeve, and pulled out Hot Dog. ‘Voila!’

‘OH!’ Isabel jumped in surprise. ‘Oh my lord! Look at that! You *do* have a weasel!’

‘Her name is Hot Dog,’ Becky said. ‘She’s a good girl. She uh, gave me a hand, once. When I got stuck in my wildshape form.’

‘*Mmhm! Sure did,*’ Hot Dog gave a smug nod before she was replaced in Orson’s sleeve.

‘You got stuck in wildshape?’ Isabel asked. ‘Oh, dear! That must have been terrible!’

‘Hah! Yeah!’ Orson laughed. ‘She got kept as a pet for three days!’

‘Oh, my!’

‘Mm,’ Becky gave Orson an annoyed look, though it only seemed to amuse him. ‘I’m fine now, though.... Orson and Hot Dog found me and took me home.’

‘Heh, yeah,’ Orson snickered. ‘I’m your *hero!*’

‘Ooh, what’s *that* pin mean?’ Isabel asked out of nowhere, pointing to Orson’s pins.

‘Which one?’ Orson asked, pulling on his robe to show off his collection. ‘Oh— That one? That’s the trans flag.’

‘Trans flag?’ Isabel echoed, and Becky felt like her legs were turning into jelly.

‘Yeah!’

‘What’s *trans*?’ Isabel asked. ‘Is it a country in the Underdark? I saw Isa mention it, in the chat Becky made the other day— But I was a little too nervous to ask what it was, in case she got angry at me again.’

Becky took a deep breath.

*Isabel didn’t know what being trans was?*

Oh, god. This was going to be a real test of a moment....

‘Pfft,’ Orson scoffed a laugh. ‘It’s not a country. It’s when you change your gender.’

‘*Change your gender?*’ Isabel’s eyes went wide.

‘Yeah,’ Orson waved a hand casually. ‘I used to be a girl when I was a kid. But now I’m a man, and take medicine to make myself masculine....’

Becky held her breath as Orson continued to explain his gender to Isabel. It was nerve-wracking. Especially since Isabel listened in complete *silence*....

It was clear she was trying *very* hard to understand what Orson was saying. But whether or not she would —and whether or not she’d be accepting— Becky wasn’t sure....

‘And, yeah,’ Orson shrugged. ‘That’s how that works.’

Isabel stared in silence for a moment.... Then, she turned to Becky and smiled wide.

‘Did you *hear* that, Becky?!’ she exclaimed, pointing to Orson. ‘Oh my *god!* I can’t *believe* how amazing medicine is getting! First we get a vaccine for chicken pox, instead of having to have pox parties, and now we can *change our sexes?!* Oh, it’s just so wonderful! Good for you, Orson! Good for you!’

Becky’s breath came back; as did the hot red blush that spread all the way down her neck to her shoulders.

It wasn’t the terrible, relationship-ending response that she’d been expecting.

It was an *embarrassing* response— But at least it wasn’t a *humiliating* one—

‘Oh, does that mean that you date women or men?’ Isabel asked, and Becky made a noise that sounded like it could have come from Don. ‘And if you *did* date a girl, would you be considered gay or straight?’

‘If I dated a girl it would be straight,’ Orson said simply. ‘And if I dated a guy, gay.’

*If.*

Becky eyed Orson.

Orson *was* dating a guy.... But, she couldn’t say that. Orson wasn’t out about being gay....

‘Or if I dated both I’d be bisexual,’ Orson shrugged.

‘*Bisexual*,’ Isabel echoed, raising a finger in thought and turning to Becky.

‘*Bisexual*.... Your mother was bisexual, you know. She used to follow this girl Sasha around all the time in school!’

‘Oh— yeah! Mum told me about being bi, once,’ Becky rubbed the back of her neck, feeling herself grin when Don nuzzled his beak under her hand to turn it into a pat for himself. ‘When I was figuring out I liked girls, she told me about how she liked girls, too.’

‘She did?’

‘Yeah.’

‘*Ooh.*’

‘Heh. Well, I have to head off. I gotta go meet Benny,’ Orson gave a chuckle. ‘See you later, Becky. And Isabel? It was interesting to meet you.’

‘Oh, yes! It was *lovely* to meet you, too!’ Isabel beamed. ‘Have fun transing that gender of yours!’

‘Auntie, *no!*’

—END—

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