

Toxic Friends

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Lindsay Wincherauk

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life on the slush pile productions

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Verbal Abusers



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THE FOLLOWING STORY + DIALOGUE IS REAL

"You are fitter than I am." Said a friend at a local watering hole on a Tuesday afternoon to a man whose been ensnarled in a three-year legal battle that had destroyed him financially.

"I now have back fat. I could charge people admission to see it, but since you are broke and poor, you couldn't afford to pay. And besides, you will probably live longer than me, so I will never see my money."

"What you just said hurt me; you know it has been a stressful three years." Said the friend, the narrator of this story.

"Your problem is you overreact to things. You focus on the wrong things. I'm sick of this."

"Why are you getting angry? Don't worry; I will get over your meanness quickly." Said the narrator.

"Fuck, you overreact, you need to focus on different things. I'm done with you."

Is it okay for someone to verbally abuse you and then, when it upsets you, get upset you are upset?
No.

"And *Last Friday*, you were being Jewish."

"What are you even talking about?"

Did he back off?

No, VA kept going.

"I wasted a lot of drugs and money on you." He barked.

What was he trying to say?

I don't know, who are you?

I'm VOR.

Who?

Think about it?

When VA said: *Last Friday*, he was referring to **GUMMY FRIDAY**—somewhat delightful nights where the Verbal Abuser provides Gummies (weed), and then conversation dots float through the air with nary a connection. Every fucking time VA says something offensive, and if for a moment I show any upset, the violence in his tone is intensified.

Can you give me an example?

Sure.

When I went to pay my tab with a CC, on several occasions, he barked out, "This should be funny."

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When I challenged him with, "What would be funny? If I'm declined? How would that be funny? Are you cheering for me to suffer? Are you cheering for me to be more stressed?"

He offered, "It would just be funny."

"I don't think it would."

"You are overreacting. You are focusing on the wrong thing. Every week when the gummy kicks in, you go dark...."

What was he implying?

I don't know; he spews the same toxic shit every week and then claims I'm overreacting or focusing on the wrong thing.

Your friend sounds like an ass. Why do you put up with his shit?

I don't know. I want to see the good.

Do you know what you need to do?

Yes. Can I share a bit from what has to be the Series Finale of Gummy Friday?

Yes.

Spoiler Alert: This is the |ending| of what will be the most explosive last episode ever.

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GUMMY FRIDAY: 2023-02-17

Since my friend attacks me verbally every week, I now deftly avoid discussing anything that matters.

Sounds like a shitty friend, I'm sorry you have to deal with him.

The afternoon was going along swimmingly; we had even escaped some of the usual racist themes that usually take the stage for a moment or two.

Like?

On another Friday, M. showed up, he noticed two empty plates on our table, and he thought a funny joke would be, "Are we, in Biafra?" And then, an hour later, a table of black men sat behind us, and he found the ignorance to say, "I hope they don't have Ebola." I kid you not.

This type of behaviour stings; many other people ignore or don't hear it; I also dismiss it because I don't want to hear how I take things too seriously, and I can't take a joke.

I don't have the same sense of disgusting humour (which is definitely not humour, as people who think nothing of being openly racist). So, when I don't say something, I feel less. And I feel alone.

On this Friday, as said, it was going swimmingly, and then...

And then...?

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The server came to take away 2G's plate. His plate had two dollops of ketchup on it; there may have been a fry stuck in each dollop. I'm not sure. The server asked 2G if he was done with his plate? 2G said, "Yeah, unless Lindsay wants it?"

I thought; little about it. I barely reacted. It felt like another comment about my financial situation, so I simply stated, "That was not funny."

2G apologized. "Sorry, that was insensitive."

Enough said. But not for VA; that was his queue. 2G and I had moved on. But no...

But no...?

For the next 10 minutes, VA went off the hook; his vitriol was intense.

What?

"I overreact; I'm brilliant but do stupid things.

I always focus on the wrong things.

I'm not the only one with problems; we're all sick of your shit" ... ad nauseam...

I'm sorry you have to deal with that.

Thanks, VOR. I didn't say a word.

I couldn't look at VA.

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I just sighed and felt awful.

He kept going, telling me I used to be funnier and needed to get over things; it was as if the three years that had turned my life upside down and placed me in a slough of uncertainty... well; he doesn't want to hear about it.

He kept going.

What did you do?

I looked away as he kept repeating, I was doing stupid things, and once my case was resolved, he hoped I would get better. And on and on, shifting gears, telling me they all talk about me, and they are sick of me – he looked at 2G and tried to get him to agree.

What did 2G do?

He told him, "Enough. You need to stop. I said something insensitive. I apologized. Enough."

But no...

But no...?

He kept looping his vitriol, and I just sat and drank it all in; as sadness filled my soul.

"I'm stupid.

I'm overreacting.

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I wasted money and drugs on you.

You're not the only one..." and on and on and on.

VOR, the day had been a heavy one for me; I never mentioned a single thing about why.

Why was the day heavy?

I had signed the release on the thing tormenting me for the last three years. I don't think I did the right thing. Three years with the world's weight on my shoulders, and by signing, the burden became heavier. I had stopped speaking about the stress of this burden on Fridays for months because of the hatred thrown my way – I had stopped giving VA a window or door into my life. He kept going?

"A couple of days ago..." the day he told me I couldn't afford the admission to see his back fat – WTF – I must give VA creativity points for finding a ridiculous way to call someone poor and then turn it into me being Jewish...?

Anyway, I could only take so much.

What did you do?

I told him to shut up, to stop, and I told him this was the end of Fridays, and I couldn't allow a friend to talk to me this way.

4 Oh my. How did VA respond?

He asked if I wanted him to buy me a beer.

Seriously?

Seriously. I said no, and then VA turned and said he was done with the both of us and stormed out of the bar.

What happened after?

I told 2G that was the worst I'd ever been spoken to, and VA's venomous verbiage had made me sad. So, I went home with one less friend.

Good riddance.

Yes. It's for the best.

I've always thought the difference between acquaintance and friendship is that if it is indeed a friendship, you share the essential things in your life without the risk of someone fucking saying, "You are not the only one who has problems."

Whereas with an acquaintance, you talk about the weather or sports or...

VA and I, have only talked about the weather for some time.

We can't let people talk to us the way VA thinks is fucking okay.

Good riddance.

I'm sad.

Wait There's More
To Be Continued