The Reckoning Is Here

Why are we having culture wars in the middle of a pandemic?

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I got COVID! What fresh hell is this? Thankfully, I'm double vaxxed and double boosted. It was the perfect ending to an awful couple of weeks. Just when I thought it couldn't get any worse, two lines on a plastic tray said different. The reckoning is here! It seems like the planet and its inhabitants can't catch a break. Just when we might get a respite, the world says "ah." Here's the assassination of the former Prime Minster of Japan, war, recession, more guns, no abortions, school prayer, new variants, and it's just July. What do you think the fall is going to bring?

To be honest, I'm pissed I got COVID. Like everyone, I'm doing the best that I can, but it is not possible to live in a bubble and still have a life. I am over it. By "it" I mean all the things that don't make sense. Why are we having culture wars in the middle of a pandemic? When we most need to be united, we find ourselves divided. Instead of working together, we are fighting of the soul of the country. Maybe the pandemic really was the catalyst for change. The virus brought to the surface what had been badly hiding for too long.

I was on a zoom with Dr. Rachel Levine, the Assistant Secretary for Health. Yes, I'm that Queen, dropping names like I drop bombs. I shared concerns about a certain member of Congress and was Dr. Levine OK? She says she's fine, but I'm worried. The congresswoman's dog whistles can lead to real harm. She put Dr. Levine in the crosshairs of hate. The White House and HHS have made sure she is safe. In addition to being a pediatrician and four-star admiral, she is living proof that we are everywhere, and we are not going away.

If the radical right follows their regular formula, they will begin to question the abilities of multiple senior LGBTQ officials, trying to generate fear about the large number of homosexuals working in the administration. Our pride makes another community afraid and angry. Dr. Levine gives me hope, but to the some she is a sign of the end of days.

The problem is there is no compromise or middle ground. We are not going back into the closet. I am a Queen, not a punching bag. I deserve to live a life free from prejudice and discrimination in all my outrageousness. Some people may see me as an exaggeration, but they underestimate me at their peril.

We have decades of experience fighting against a world that wished us dead, literally and figuratively. Our ability to work in coalition with like minded communities serves everyone. It starts with a strategy for survival in a world that hates us, who we love, the color of our skin, our gender,

or how we choose to express our gender. If we spend too much time trying to fit into their box of acceptability, we lose everything that makes us special. Don’t be less so somebody can feel more. We deserve to be here and to sit at the table. In the fight to end HIV, our voice is critical.

It may be the fever from COVID, but I can’t believe the Supreme Court and, as a result, our country are again reviewing the legality of abortion, sodomy, school prayer, and affirmative action. Issues that were long ago decided are now at risk. Justices who sold themselves as conservatives are actually very radical. While it may have been a smart short term power play, I don’t think they are prepared for the civil unrest that will follow. This Supreme Court is just starting to reveal its true nature and will set off the reckoning that is coming for all of us.

Since I had to isolate at home, I got to catch up on RuPaul’s Drag Race. I love the show because it celebrates being different. This program showed the world the art of drag. If Mama Ru taught us anything, it’s to tell your unique story in all its beauty and drama. Take the things that caused shame and transform them into your greatest strengths. I can’t imagine living the life my good Japanese parents envisioned for me. Coming out was one of the most courageous acts of treason I’ve ever accomplished. I murdered the man my parents wanted me to be to become the Queen I was supposed to be.

Yours in the Struggle,

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