

The woman stepped into the yurt shaped room, looking around to see that the combination restaurant-bar was safe. The sign outside had warned against wearing gang colors and carrying firearms, but she saw no obvious sign of trouble.

The hostess-wait person greeter her and told her to sit anywhere. Still uncertain she asked about the sign.

“Oh, we used to have a little trouble with gangs. But not anymore,” the waitress said with a slight smile before heading into the kitchen.

“Good. I was a bit concerned.”

The place seemed odd. There were no customers in the huge room, although it was a bit early. Before sitting, the woman decided she would visit the restroom, and cast about for a sign. She didn't see one but did see a set of stairs going down, and she assumed the restrooms were downstairs. The area below looked much darker, although there was a faint flickering light visible from the top of the stairs, so she climbed down.

The basement was the same shape and size as the upstairs area; there was the expected damp smell from a basement with humidity issues. The floor appeared to be made of dirt, rather than cement or concrete, scattered around the floor were areas with relatively small square disturbed areas, one seemed quite fresh when she touched it with the toe of her shoe. Against one wall, there was a stone slab, about the size of a single bed and unevenly stained with what looked like dark brown paint. The woman didn't see a restroom, so she went back to the main level and encountered the waitress at the top of the stairs.

“It looks like you have a problem with your basement.”

“No problem. But we used to have a slight vermin issue—that's been solved.”

“I'd like to eat something, but need to use the restroom first.”

“It's over there, in the next room.”

“Can I order first?”

“Sure. We have a great meatloaf, made with local fresh meat and a gravy thickened with our own special sauce.”

“That sounds great!”

“Okay then, I'll cut you a slab of that and have it when you get back.”