

Love

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I trembled as I handed in my writing assignment.

My teacher's eyes widened as she took in the title, but she made no comment. I felt my face go red as I walked straight down the aisle and slid in my seat next to Jess. I sat upright, facing forwards and placed my hands on my thighs.

Jess reached under the table and clasped my hand in hers. I didn't speak but let out a narrow breath.

The teacher addressed the class. "Thank you all for handing in your writing assignments about a struggle in your life. Three of these will be read out by our three volunteers, Jess, Harry and Will. Please be quiet and respectful while this is occurring. This process will be done anonymously. Jess, please go first and choose a story from the box."

Jess walked up and chose a story from the very bottom.

"My life when my dog died." She read out. She continued reading clearly, but my concentration wavered. I fingered the stitching on my jeans. Jess finished the story and sat next to me.

"Well done." I whispered.

She nodded. "Thanks"

Harry sauntered up the aisle and picked up a single typed page.

"Separating Parents," He read.

I zoned out as he continued his reading. I'm sure it was very sad, but I didn't much care. I stared out the window, watching the clouds float by. Harry finished his reading and slouched back in his chair.

Will jumped out of his seat and jogged to the front. He picked up the top story. I paled.

"Growing Up Gay," He read. A wave of sniggering swept the classroom. My heart pounded as I heard slurs from my classmates, my friends.

"They should all go die in hell." Said a voice maliciously.

That steeled my resolve. I slowly got to my feet. "You can't say things like that." I stammered.

Everyone went silent. My palms began to sweat.

A lone boy at the back of the class spoke again. "Dyke,"

Jess got up next to me. "She's not the only one."



Jess pulled me in for a kiss. I melted, finding her in the midst of so much hate. Her lips tasted like strawberries, smooth and respondent. I moved into to her, even when the teacher shouted, “that’s enough,” even with a battering of pens tried to separate us.

In her, I found love.