

Riley

While I'm getting ready the anxiety sets in. Will people like me? Are people going to bully me? I feel like I'm going to puke. I wonder if I can get out of this stupid welcoming party for all of the newbies. My mom would never allow that, would she? Turns out she wouldn't allow that, as I thought. So here I stand, in the middle of the gym trying to find a place to sit.

The blue and gray walls, (school colors I'm assuming,) feel like they're closing in. It's not that big of a gym really. The ceiling is not that high, the bleachers take up most of the room. Making it very easy to become claustrophobic. I know I shouldn't be judging but about 98% of these people look like they're stuck up and not too friendly to people like me. There are people everywhere, happy, normal teenagers. Why can't I be like them? As of tomorrow these surrounding people will be my peers. I guess I should just jump right in huh? In my dreams I would be that confident. Everyone else seems to already be socializing, finding their way just fine... Not me. Okay, I found an open corner to sit in. Time to nonchalantly run to it.

Heading to the corner my new principal booms in the microphone, "Hurry and find a seat newcomers, then partner up!" As if my anxiety wasn't bad enough? On my way to get to my seat I bump into somebody. "I'm so sorry, I wasn't watching where I was going.." He was saying as he turned around and sat down. It was like time stood still. He was the most gorgeous person I had ever seen. Snap out of it Riley, do you hear what you're saying? Boys aren't cute, hints the word lesbian.

In my own daze, I completely missed what the principal had said. Noticing I was the only one standing, I sat down next to the guy who just apologized. This will be fun I think sarcastically, thankfully he seems nice enough.

Blake

Like I wasn't nervous enough. Not paying attention I accidentally bumped into somebody. I don't know what to make of it. When I saw her, my stomach did a back flip then a cartwheel while skating on ice. Kind of like butterflies? She's absolutely stunning. She has dark brown naturally curly hair down to her stomach. Big blue eyes, a few light freckles. Absolutely beautiful, wearing combat boots, skinny jeans and a Good Charlotte shirt. Now she's sitting next to me and we're partners for this "getting to know each other" game. Act cool Blake, you can do it.

This is the first time I've been stealth since coming out as transgender. My binder is on and I'm constantly moving my shirt to look just right, and I keep remembering to pull down my sleeves on my shirt. It'd be nice to start a new school without hearing anything involving my gender or self harming problems. It's getting really hard to concentrate on anything but her though. I'm awestruck by her. She's telling me about herself right now, and it's like she's my long lost best friend. We have so much in common. Her smile is the most beautiful thing I have ever seen.

Our mutual likings are plenty. Sunday nights are reserved for Dexter, our favorite show. Who knew other people liked watching a guy father a child while killing bad guys? We both love rock music but also enjoy country music. The thing that surprised me most is that she likes to skateboard. When I asked what her all time favorite thing to do was, I couldn't hold back a smile. She also likes to look at constellations in the sky at night. Although I don't have a telescope she has a really nice one and has actually seen the biggest constellation, the Hydra.

3 months later:

Riley

I'm so glad I met Blake, he's become the best friend I've never had. Even though it's happened fast, I really think our friendship will last a long time. He knows that I'm a lesbian, but I still question my feelings for him. Every time we hug or he looks in my

eyes I just get this spark. I know it's weird, but it can't mean that I like him like that though.. He's not a girl. I'm a lesbian. Plus, boys make me uncomfortable..except for him.

He's coming over soon though and we're going to watch some Nicholas Sparks movies. After hours of begging last night on the phone, he finally caved. I hope this isn't awkward. How could anything be awkward with him though? He's my absolute best friend, and I'm his. We talk for hours everyday, when I'm upset I go to him and cry on his shoulder. Every weekend we watch Dexter reruns. He's like the peanut butter to my jelly; The glue to my broken vase. I know if I ever have flashbacks, I could go to him and talk about it. He doesn't know the whole story just because I don't like going back, but he knows that my father is in prison. I don't think it would change how he views me. Or would it?

Blake

As I'm walking to Riley's house I have a lot on my mind. Why didn't I tell her before that I was transgender? We've gotten really close, but I just don't want her to not accept it and freak out. Then I'd be outed to everyone. I know it's only my fears talking though. Maybe I'll tell her soon.

I thought my feelings would go away, but they haven't. The last thing I need right now is a relationship though. It's taken a year to get where I am now, with my depression under control. However, watching romantic movies will be awkward tonight when all I want to be is the Noah to her Allie.

During the movie she grabs my hand and squeezes it, while almost crying. I remind her it'll be okay and I wrap my other arm around her. She looks up at me smiling and the butterflies, like always, don't stop.

The movie ends and I help her clean up the living room. After we go upstairs to her

room and look through her telescope. Finding a bunch of stars, a big dipper, and the most beautiful, brightest constellation -the Hydra constellation, we happily went to call it quits when a shooting star shot across the moonlit sky. "Make a wish," I whispered in her ear. She turned around to me and said, "You're here, what else can I ask for?" I couldn't help it, leaning in to kiss her, she leans in too. We kiss and sparks flew. I've never had a kiss feel like that- ever. I never wanted it to end. She pulled away and we go downstairs and notice the time, so I decide to head home. We hug and I walk out the door.

I'm so confused on what to do next. What does this mean? I've never felt so much passion or had my stomach do so many flips with anybody before. I'm going to make her mine.

Before bed, I get a text from Riley. Happy that she texted, I quickly hit the open button. It read, "What happened can never happen again. I'm sorry and I hope nothing has changed." After reading it I felt my heart shatter.

Riley

Yesterday shouldn't have happened. I don't know why I leaned in when he went to kiss me. My appointment was at three, and I got here at two. Lucy always knows how to help me. That's why I decided to take the long commute once a week after I moved. Finding a therapist like her is very hard.

As soon as she called me into her office I spilled my heart out to her. She knows all about my past- about how all my life I've never wanted a man. How I swore I never would after what happened. I told her about the kiss, and how it confused me. About how Blake didn't frighten me, how it felt just right.. It made me feel safe and like nothing could hurt me, not even him..

We talked about my father abusing me. How he would throw me around and how

my mom didn't know until last year. I talked about how men frighten me and how I don't trust them, except Blake. He makes me feel safe. A couple years ago I started liking girls, they didn't frighten me. I even had a long relationship with an amazing girl who was my first love. That's when I believed I was a lesbian. Talking to my therapist though, I realized I am really bisexual. I do like men, I'm just scared of them. Except Blake, what makes him so different? What about him makes my heart do cartwheels?

I go to Blake right after therapy to explain what happened and my feelings. When I knock on his door he opens it instantly with a coat already on like he was leaving. I tell him I can come back later if he was leaving and he replies, "You're here, where else would I need to be? Besides, I think we should talk."

Mumbling, I bite my lip and look down. "If it's about the kiss and everything, I came to talk about it too." What he said next made me scared and intrigued. "I haven't told you everything, and I'm sorry. Can we go for a walk?" We started walking and he tells me about his childhood, his other life.

I can tell he's scared, so I hold on to him. Very softly he starts to tell me everything, barely breathing in between words, "I'm sorry that I didn't tell you everything when we first met. I wanted a new start, and I didn't want to be known as that freak, I didn't want you to see me differently like everyone else did. When I was 16 I came out. I labeled myself a lesbian because that's what I thought I was, but it just didn't feel right. Months later I put together the puzzle pieces and realized I was transgender, that I was born into the wrong body." He starts to tear up and I hug him.

"You're still Blake to me. The Blake I love, the Blake I call my best friend." I tell him as I try to calm him down. He calms down a little, but then he looks sad. "When my father found out he started hitting me and even became verbally abusive." He tells me this looking down, and tells me the rest. His mom didn't do anything because Blake's whole life his dad had been beating her behind closed doors and she was scared. She

was afraid it'd make things worse for both of them if she did anything.

His dad died a year later due to cancer. His mother and him moved over the summer and completely accepted him as he is. She got him into gender counseling, bought him a binder and uses male pronouns. He's been self harming for a while, and is diagnosed with major depression. I sit here letting it all sink in as he spills his heart out to me about his life. It made sense, why he never wanted to go to the beach, introduce me to his family and why he was always being self conscious and fixing his shirts, never wearing short sleeves. Understanding why he didn't tell me I let him know that I'm always there for him and that nothing changed. Grateful, he hugs me then asks what I came to talk about.

So this is the part where I confess my past, my feelings and my thoughts. I tell him about my similar upbringing, how my dad abused me my whole life. Blake understood but was also clearly very upset that someone hurt me my whole life. I then tell him about the butterflies that have never gone away when I see him. Then I explain about how Lucy let me understand that I'm not a lesbian, and how I usually fear men but he makes me feel safe. He goes to hug me and whispers in my ear, "I love you Riley. I would never, ever hurt you. You're my Hydra in this cold dark night, the only person I've ever trusted." Holding back tears I kiss him, not holding anything back. I let my heart go to him in that moment. Hoping he won't break it, knowing in my heart and mind that he won't.

Blake

I can't believe I had the courage to come out to her. When we first met I felt like we were very similar, and I had no idea. Although I never got to stand up for myself to my dad because he died, she hasn't because he is in prison for hurting her among other things.

Relationships have never been easy finding with my gender identity, but I feel like

Riley could handle it. We're going to see how things go and possibly begin dating. She's one of a kind, and she is truly something. That kiss was like sunshine on a rainy day. It was all I needed, but now I want more. I want her to be mine, now till the end of time.

We've only known each other a few months, but I just know that she is the one for me. She has life goals, her personality is amazing and fits mine perfectly. Just like our hands fit together perfectly. Since I was 12 I've been struggling with my depression and battling self harm on a daily basis. Ever since we became close friends I haven't harmed myself and that is the longest I have ever gone. She makes me not even think about it. She can make my bad thoughts disappear completely, like they were never there.

5 months later

Riley

Being with him I never have to spend a second alone in despair. He's always there when I need him, and I feel like I'm always there when he needs me too. I've learned to truly live, not just breathe and walk through life in mechanical motions doing things I think I should. I've learned to make the choices I WANT for me, I've learned to smile because I want to, not because I have to, I've learned to love myself, and I've learned to love somebody else unconditionally. I've learned to be open minded and love someone for what is in their heart, not under their clothes.

Most importantly though, I've learned to face my fears. We're taking the two hour drive today to face my father. I will tell him everything I've wanted to since he started beating me. I've learned to live, without regret, without fear. All thanks to Blake, my hero, my night and shining armor, my own personal Hydra.