

Amora never dreamed of being in love. She had been with many boys in her teenage years because why not? But she never felt strong feelings towards any of them. She *liked* a couple of them, but love was out of the question.

But boys did fall for her, and when they did they fell too fast. Each one of them said "I love you" sooner than expected. She was someone who wanted to wait to say them; she thought very highly of those words and wanted them to mean something. But, in the many times that she told the guys to slow down, nothing changed.

Amora often wondered why so many decided on her. She was beautiful, yes, but as for talents she had none. She didn't play a sport, never picked up an instrument, had average intelligence and, in short, was a basic teenage girl. The only thing she had to her advantage was looks. Many girls envied her for her vibrant red hair that folded in elegant curls down to her stomach. Her green eyes that reflect the sun and her pale skin that made her gleam in the daylight. She was thin and short, but her curves were defined. She was the picture-perfect model that everyone wanted to be.

However, after her last relationship (which only lasted a week), she was starting to feel like something was different. She began to notice other people more than she noticed attractive men. While before she could stare at a young man and say, "He's cute!", now she looked at many young women and admitted the same thing. She knew this wasn't her; she knew that she needed to bring it up to someone.

Maybe it's just a phase, she thought. Maybe it's just hormones. But when the feeling continued for a month, she decided it was not just hormones.

Her best friend Marla identifies as a lesbian. Amora knew that she could count on her friend to help her with this. So one day, while out shopping with Marla, she brought it up.

"Hey, I've been meaning to ask you about something, I hope you can help me with it."

"What's up, girlie?"

Amora hesitated for a moment, trying to find her words as she went.

"Well, I've been thinking that um....well... maybe I'm not as attracted to men as I think I really am."

Marla stares at her for a second, and on her face Amora can clearly see a sort of brightening pass across it. Marla smiles and takes Amora's hand.

"Girlie, I'm glad you told me about this. I have been noticing some different behavior in you, but I suspected it was just stress or something."

Amora sighs, relieved that she has a best friend who understands the situation. "So what can I do about this feeling?"

"Well what I suggest is to go out and notice everyone you see. Not just girls and not just boys. Take into account everyone around you. Listen to how you react when someone attractive passes by. With this suspicion, you don't want to shut out one gender. Keep them all in mind. And you might not be fascinated by two genders, you might learn that you like all of them! You have to explore, and this time in your life is the perfect time to. But who knows, you may never figure it out. And that's ok too! I never want you to feel alone in this condition. I want you to know that I am here, and I always will be."

Marla's words were so moving, so touching that Amora felt her eyes burn with emotion. She turned away from her, but Marla laughed and pulled her in for a hug.

"I love you, girlie."

"Love you too, Marla."

Weeks passed as quickly as the birds soared. Amora had been taking Marla's advice. She went out to the village, sometimes with Marla, sometimes alone, and just looked. She noticed all kinds of people. Men with flannel shirts and backwards caps. Women in dresses and heels. Boys in tee shirts and curly hair. Girls in black skirts and fully black makeup. But everyday Amora visited the sports store just so she could see someone in particular.

The young woman behind the counter had thick brown hair always pulled up into a bun at the top of her head. When she turned around, you could see her undercut shaved into a sophisticated geometric pattern above the back of her neck. She wore a silver nose ring and three stud earrings in each ear everyday. Her silver chain necklace hung down past her collarbone. That girl really likes silver! She wore black band tank tops, today the band was Metallica. The top rose all the way to the base of her neck but hung down to her ribs at the sleeves. Amora had overheard what she was called the third time she entered the shop.

Tess.

Amora had been admiring this Tess ever since she walked into the sports store mistaking it for a thrift shop one day. The air was hot that day and she had had a long day at school; her brain wasn't exactly the sharpest.

But thank the stars it wasn't!

Amora had taken Marla here only once, because Marla had almost walked right up to Tess and asked for her number for Amora's sake. She didn't want Marla getting in the way of this situation, especially because Marla was severely overprotective and would threaten to basically kill Tess if she so much as laid two fingers on Amora. But a week ago, Amora had worked up the courage to talk to Tess, and they had been friendly ever since.

When she walked in now, the small bell above the door announcing her arrival, Tess looked up from her computer. The most striking smile ranged over her face. It made Amora's heart sing.

"How's it going?" Tess asks. Her voice was an octave lower than Amora's, but she adored it nonetheless.

"It's been good, how about you?"

Since the day they started talking, Amora had felt this sense of comfort and freedom with Tess. She felt like she could tell her anything. She was surprised at this feeling because it never had struck her during her conversations with boyfriends. She never told them anything personal, for that matter didn't speak much at all. She let them do the talking.

But Tess was different.

"Not very busy here and school is the same boring, hellish place that it always is," Tess smiles.

Amora giggles. For a moment the two stare at each other, then Tess says, "Has anyone ever told you that you have the most brilliant eyes?"

Amora is taken slightly aback by this; she didn't expect Tess to comment on her at all. But she is flattered, and to counter this she says, "Has anyone ever told you that you have the shiniest hair I've ever seen?"

Tess chuckles without taking her eyes off Amora.

"I haven't heard that one before, no."

Amora can tell that Tess doesn't want to look away, and neither does she. She has never felt more delighted when Tess smiles, when Tess speaks, when Tess laughs.

Suddenly, after many minutes of just staring, Tess speaks again.

"Do you wanna go grab some ice cream with me. My shift is—"

"Yes."

The word was out of her mouth before she even knew she said it. Tess looked startled but jovial at the rapid reply.

"I'm sorry, I should have let you finish before I said yes. I just really like you and, if I'm being honest, I was waiting for the right time to ask you out."

Tess keeps her sharp smile, but if possible it grows twice the size.

"You're so sweet. Well I was gonna say that my shift is over in like 10 minutes, so we can go then if you're cool with that, but it seems like you already are."

Amora giggles, "Yeah I'm definitely cool with that."

"Good."

They gaze at each other for another minute until Tess's boss pokes his head out of his office.

"I'm gonna let you go a few minutes early, Tessy. Not much to see here and it looks like you've got somewhere to be."

He winks at Amora and she gives him a warm smile.

Tess thanks the boss and walks around the counter towards Amora. She drapes her arm around her and guides her out the door.

"I'm in the mood for some chocolate, what about you?"

"I like chocolate."

"I like you."

"I like you too."

"Is it too early to say I love you?"

"Probably."

"Whatever. I love you, Amora."

"I love you too, Tess."