

Pink

Rata Woodhouse

My backpack swung at my side, rattling with its contents as I sprinted towards her.

“Vanessa!” The name tasted sweet on my tongue, a soft prickly sensation that sent butterflies fluttering into my stomach. Vanessa turned and frowned a little - which caused her freckles to bunch up into an adorable little blob. Why was it that every time I looked at her I felt this way? This fluttery, pink feeling that I only experience when I’m around her.

“Hey, Raegan!” She grinned. I leapt at Vanessa, arms open, knocking her onto the pavement. I could feel her heartbeat against my thudding one and that sent this rosy coloured feeling rushing through me. I blushed and clambered back onto the concrete.

“Sorry...” I whispered, suddenly very embarrassed. She laughed with her twinkly chiming chuckle, which only caused me to blush a further red.

“No, I'm sorry! I forgot about you again.” She stood up awkwardly and offered her hand to me. As I took it a static feeling rushed through me - much stronger than just the pink. Why did I want to constantly hold her hands? She was a girl! And so was I! I wasn't gay, was I? I brushed off my stockings and started walking beside her. Vanessa was... she was... as close to perfect as biologically possible. Her eyes always sparkled with laughter and she was smart but not too smart and she was just... Vanessa, with her strawberry-scented flowing brown hair.

“Vanessa?” I murmured, I felt her eyes on me but I kept my head down. “Would you...”

“Would I...?” My courage vanished as quickly as it had appeared.

“Nevermind!” I forced a smile. “I have to go this way home today, bye!” I bolted around the corner onto Pearl St but just heard her mumble.

“Bye...”

I kept my head down as I walked, fiddling with the note home from my teacher. I was informed not to read it but I had anyway. It read: Dear Parents of Raegan Wilbrew, I’m sure you’re aware that Raegan has failed my class. Please don’t worry about this, she’ll still graduate but Raegan will have to retake the exam for the fourth time. Signed: Pamela Birch. Yes. I wasn’t the smartest. I folded the note in half and then in half again until it was a tiny little square, then threw it onto the street. Vanessa’s freckled face shimmered in my mind and I suddenly felt fuzzy. Maybe I was gay? I turned into my driveway and wandered to the front door. I could hear yelling coming from inside. Either my dad had come home from work late or Mary had stolen Jim's toy cars again. I sighed and

pushed open the door to be greeted by a wonderful sight. Dad and Mum were at each other's throats and Mary was holding five cars out of reach of Jim. I covered my ears and raced up the stairs, slamming my door behind me. I threw my school bag into the corner, laying down on my bed. My room wasn't much. It was pretty small and hadn't been re-painted since I was five so the walls were a sickening shade of salmon but I'd mostly covered them with posters so it was okay, I guess. I opened up my laptop and typed into the search bar: Am I gay? After hours of quizzes and articles I was still nowhere. I clicked off the tab and covered my face. Why was this so difficult? There was a distant call of: "DINNER!" and I closed my laptop and ran downstairs.

Dinner should have been delicious but to me it all tasted bland. As I took another mouthful of rice my mother straightened her back.

"So, sweetie?" I glared up at her. "How was-" Mary interrupted her bluntly.

"Kiss any boys?!" I choked on my food and raised my eyebrows in shock.

"What the fu-" I started

"LANGUAGE!" My dad screeched.

"Sorry... What the hell?!" Mary chuckled, turning to whisper into Jim's ear.

"Told you she was gay!" My mother raised her arm and slapped her, leaving a red mark across Mary's porcelain skinned face. Mary whimpered and held her pretty little hand to her cheek but knew not to say anything more in case of another attack. I had always thought what happened in our house was normal, but one day a teacher came to school and talked about abuse and domestic violence. I didn't say anything about my household though... I guess I was scared to speak up. All of us used to be beaten if we said even the slightest thing wrong; I knew now though to keep to myself in front of my parents and in case anyone asked, the bruises I still received were from walking into the door frame. Our meal ended in silence and I walked back up to my room, closed the door behind me and slumped against the wall, crying.

I was going to tell her. Today, I was going to tell Vanessa how I felt. I stopped beside her and took a deep breath in. She paused further up the street as she realised I wasn't with her anymore. Vanessa turned around and started walking back, tilting her head to the side in confusion. When she was about 30 centimeters away from me I stopped her and slipped my hands into hers. "I- I uh- shit." I'd never done this before, clearly. She looked at me with her sparkling blue eyes.

"Take your time," Vanessa smiled and the pink rushed through me, sending waves of courage. I squeezed her hands and she squeezed mine back.

"I like you! I like you more than just a friend and I want to hold hands and be with you forever! Sorry..." I whispered that last part.

"Why are you sorry?" She pulled me towards her into a kiss. Everything else disappeared when our lips brushed and I felt myself float away on a cloud of pink.