

LESBIHONEST

By

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Act I

**Mic check, testing, 1, 2, I'm gay, I'm gay, I'm gay... (*lights up*)
I mean, hello, I'm Laura Piccinin, I'm gay.**

It's been a long journey of coming out to people individually, so now I do it en masse. Thank you for being here. When I first came out, I did a soft launch with my best friend, we'll call her Adriane—'cause that's her name. When I came out to her, I was 23 and very nervous and we were sitting on her bed and I finally gathered the courage to blurt out, "I'm gay." And she lit up and said, "Can I marry you?!" And I froze; like, oh shit. Uh-- and I'm thinking, *I just came out three seconds ago, and I'm all of a sudden in a very serious relationship. But I can't say no, she's clearly been waiting all of her life for me to say that, she just proposed!* She must have sensed my hesitation; seen the cogs a-turnin', because she immediately clarified, "I want to (*miming holding a bible*) marry you (*pointing to an imaginary couple*).

Officiate! Oh thank fuck, yes you can do that.

A lot of people have known that they were gay their whole

lives, but I grew up religious, so I had more of a gay-piphany in the middle of the night. I had been watching “Ellen”, not her talk-show, her sit com series from the 90s. It was the first time I had ever seen two women in love. Not having sex; I’d seen a lot of that, but two women who were in love. They held hands, went to dinner, and placed their heads gently on one another’s shoulders. I woke up out of a dead sleep that night like, (*gasp*) I’m gay! The only other time that happened to me I woke up like, (*gasp*) I need bangs! The only difference was, people really dug the bangs.

The easiest person to come out to was my brother. If a picture could capture our personalities as kids, I’d be a blur, and he’d be a blob. Very relaxed since birth, nowhere in particular to be. We had one game we played together called the Wiggy Waggy. Normal kids call it an airplane. The bigger kid lays down and uses his feet to fly his littler friends. There was a song I had, “*Wiggy waggy, wiggy waggy, ooh ooh ooh*”. I didn’t say it was a good song.

Anyway, I just said to him, “Knock knock”, and he said, “Who’s there?” and I said, “I’m gay”. And he took a long,

thoughtful pause and said, “I’m gay, who?”. *(pause)* Then he said, can I be there when you tell mom and dad?

So it’s the big day and we’re all sitting silently at the table, and it’s very tense. I know why I’m so tense, but I don’t know why everyone else is. Later, I found out it’s because my parents were trying to tell us they were getting a divorce. They had been married for 26 years, and I had been straight for 23, and today’s the day we both chose to blow each other’s minds. Turns out, they were “married” much in the way that I was “straight”. They chose this particular date as sort of a, “Your brother’s moving out for university this September, and dad’s just also going to move out”.

But, I’m getting ahead of myself. We’re sitting there and I glance over to my brother like, “It’s happening”. “Mom, dad, I’ve got something to say and I’m only going to say it once, I’m gay”.

Something you should know about my mother is, that she has a very limited range of emotional expression. If we’re working on a scale from 0-10, I’ve only ever seen her at a 1 or 2. Her reaction to this news was a 2.5. The difference was in

the eyeballs (*wide*). First she said, “Is this because I went to back to work right after having you?”. No, that’s why I have abandonment issues. I’m gay because of Mariska Hargitay.

She said, “*Gay?* You can’t be *gay*, I would know if my daughter was *gay*.” Stop saying *gay* like that, mom. And no you wouldn’t because you didn’t. And, what do you mean you would have known? Was I supposed to be shitting rainbows as a baby? Take up axe throwing? Tennis? What caricature were you expecting? Or maybe I’d get a pixie cut (which, I did), or openly fawn over lady leads in fictional crime tv shows. I talked about my love for Mariska Hargitay EVERY WEEK. Did you think I was joking? Or did you think I wanted to be a detective? Or maybe, I’d be a little too physical with my girlfriends at sleepovers, and when you caught us we’d make up a weird excuse about reaching for a CD on the other side of the bed and falling on top of each other. What did you think then? Maybe that we were just stupid and terribly uncoordinated, which I suppose at the time was an easier pill to swallow.

“Well what, you just switched to being gay?” No, I just *am* gay. I was previously gay, I am currently gay, and I plan to be

gay in the future; and now, I'm letting you in on it. And she says, "Well, I hope you switch back," and leaves the table, and the house.

My dad has not said a word so far, and is staring down with his hands on the table until he mumbles, "Cinco de Mayo". What? "May 5th, Laura. It's Cinco de Mayo! CINCO. DE. MAYO! I can't believe it, all of this on Cinco de Mayo!". You're not wrong, but we're Italian. And I don't think you know what Cinco de Mayo is. And then he gets up, grabs a bottle of Jack Daniels and he leaves. I've never seen him drink Jack Daniels in my life. But he knew exactly where it was.

Now, I'll be honest, I handled the news of the divorce just as badly they handled the gay. One week later to the day, we all sat down for another confusingly tense dinner and my mom said, "You had your special news now it's our turn". Except they didn't say it like that, they said, "We're getting a divorce!". Now normally when people find out their parents are getting divorced, 'cause they're usually children at the time, will say, "Is it my fault?" "Don't you love each other

anymore?” “Don’t you love *me* anymore?”, but I said, “You motherfuckers. What took you so long!”.

And she—she didn’t say anything right away, I could see it in her eyes. She was like (*blinking*) yep, fair. That’s on us. My b my b my b. I almost said, “Is this because you went back to work right after having me?”, but I bit my tongue. All of this on dole de Mayo.

I remember being very upset for about a day before I realized that they had 100% made the right decision. They didn’t love each other. Not for some time. And they deserve love.

I’ve never seen my parents kiss. I’ve never seen them hold hands, hug, or high-five, and to be honest, I never really noticed because I had nothing to compare it to. But the absence of their love set a tone in the house. We were four people living completely emotionally independent lives. I was told I was held a lot as a baby, with no explanation as to what happened with that, and why that completely dropped off and we’re now strictly touchless family.

A few times, I considered why my parents continued to give me all these presents and opportunities and dance lessons when they seemed to not really like me all that much? I guess I decided to be grateful instead of wondering if it was me, or if it was a product of their marriage.

I hugged my brother for the first time the night they told us. And it was weird. We ran into each other at the corner of where our rooms met, and I asked, “Do you want a hug?” and he said, “...yeah”. And we hugged in the dark for the longest 2 seconds of my life.

I remember being particularly upset about losing this one family tradition where at dinner my dad used to eat the fatty chunks of steak that I'd cut off and put on the corner of the plate because I didn't want them. Sometimes, he would even eat chunks that I spit out and put on a different corner of the plate so he *wouldn't* take them, but every once in a while he got to it before I could tell him. My friends made the very good point that he can still eat the fat off my plate even if he's divorced, but somehow, it was never the same.

To their credit, my parents are actually great at being divorced. My dad lives across the street and he takes her car for oil changes and she does his taxes. Whatever. Back to the gay.

Since the confession campaign is going so well, I've decided to tell my grandparents. They were getting pretty old so I figured I needed to pick up the pace, but my mom was begging me not to tell them. She warned me I might kill them. My family is Catholic. I was a child in church choir singing, "Oh Lord, Jesus Christ, you are my favourite". Or some variation of that. And my grandmother, went to seminary school. I don't know if you're familiar with such a place, but it's where priests go to become priests. Now, they don't let women become priests, but they will take your money and allow you to audit the class. So my grandmother did that, at 85 years old. She had a crush on the teacher priest, but that's fine with us. It seems to me like she should have graduated as a nun, but apparently that's not how it works.

I once typed out an essay she wrote for the class that was supposed to be 2,000 words but was only 1,000 and I said, "Mama, it's a bit short". And she said, "Well that's all I have

to say". And she got an A. Be like Mama.

I had a falling out with the church that began at around the time I realized there was a world outside that I had really not been paying attention to. I looked around at us all, standing and responding, kneeling and signing away and I thought to myself, *what the fuck are we all talking about?* I mean, I understand words, but I don't understand *any* of these words in these configurations. How can we restore the saltiness of the Earth? Who cares! Is the Earth low on sodium? Is that our top priority?

Then I had this moment where it was like, heaven sounds like a lot of work; to live forever and have to do all that stuff, ongoing. I don't want to go to heaven. I don't want to live on for an *eternity!* I'm only 15 and I'm fucking exhausted. No thank you, I'm good. I was told my atheism was a phase. A teenage rebellion. That coming out was pretty hard on my mom, too, and resulted in a lot of yelling.

The funnier thing is the bulk manufacturing of the communion wafer. I don't know if as a kid I thought that from Monday to Saturday the priest was just back there making

bread and flattening it with his holy shoe or something, but at one point it occurred to me that these little pieces of Jesus came in as one big sheet of tasteless cracker and were-- *(miming a large machine)*ka-chunk*-ed*. How does that man stand up there with a straight face saying, “This is the body of Christ--**ka-chunk**. We take this very seriously. Some people don’t even want it to touch their hands, they’re not worthy, it has to go straight into their mouths. **ka-chunk**. Actual Jesus. Weirder still, is that they actually sell the left over scraps so people can have them as a snack. On the bag it says, “Jesus Christ, these are good!”.

So, my mother and I are in the elevator at the old-folks home, or, “The Institute” as my grandparents liked to call it, and I’m feeling pretty confident that my grandparents love me more than they love God. And I look over to my mom who’s now at a visible 2.75, thinking that she’s pretty sure her parents love God more than they love both of us combined. I’m getting a strong “Let’s not tell grandma” vibe. Don’t cause a fuss, don’t burden her with your identity. Let her die never having known you. That’s the right thing to do.

We come inside and we're sitting down. Mama, Papa, and my aunt Geraldine, who also lives in The Institute, are sitting on the couch, three in a row. My mom is staring at the floor. Everyone's wondering why we're here because we have never visited like this in the 5 years they've been living here. So I just get right to it and say, "I'm gay".

Now, the reaction here, I can only describe as a Greek chorus of confusion. "I'm gay", "What? Huh? Oh my." And that was the last I heard about that. There were no follow-up questions. That reaction is Catholic speak for, "We heard you, but that's enough of that". And then they died. Not that day, but they did die.

When I was in high school, I was teased and called a carpet muncher. How did they know? I didn't know. Maybe it was my haircut. I cut it all off in 10th grade for no reason known to me. I remember sitting in history class, staring off into space one day and then suddenly and shockingly realizing I had a crush on my teacher, Miss. Petroni. I was mortified, and I said to myself with utmost disgust, "You do not think about this ever again, you do not tell anyone, ever. Put it away.

Burry it". And I did. For two years it didn't cross my mind again, because I wouldn't allow it. I addressed it in my journal as "the problem" and never elaborated on what it meant, what it was, or what I was supposed to do about it other than ignore it completely.

In grade 12, told 3 of my closest friends I that I was bisexual. My two closest guy friends were ecstatic and assumed I would soon be doing porn and having sex with women in front of them. They assumed bisexual meant, "a slut so horny she can't stop at men". She's so ramped up she's run out of men to fuck and now she's looking to expand. Sex sex sex sex sex." Am I giving off that vibe right now? And I thought the same thing, even though I was a virgin, which is why I hated myself so much. Due to porn, there are some heterosexual men who actually believe that lesbianism is an invitation of some sort. The worst stigma of lesbianism is that it's performative. Somehow, some men found a way to make the only thing that's not about them, still about them. The way my friends reacted reinforced how awful it was to be not-straight, so I didn't come out for another 6 years.

I thought being bi meant that I could split my identity down the middle, just ignore the gay half and live life as a straight person, but it ate away at me in a way I hadn't expected. It felt like a lie, even though I was convinced that it wasn't. To this day, I can't believe how powerfully my identity made itself known, and how much of a burden it was to keep it in check. My gayness wasn't opt-in.

I really only felt comfortable with myself after watching that season of Ellen's show, where her and her girlfriend sat on the couch, held hands, and cuddled while watching a VHS tape of the Civil War. I thought, if this is what gay is, I am so *gay!* I am really into the Civil War. Thank you, Ellen, for being the PG lesbian the world needed in the early 90's.

Hot off the press: if you tell people you're gay, eventually, you're bound to get yourself a date. But you gotta have a move. I like to open with a sneeze. Nothing gross, into the elbow, show her your responsible. But it's a great conversation starter. (*Sneeze*) Oh, bless you. Thank you. You're welcome. Free tonight? My first girlfriend actually got me with her little trick which was to look like you're going in

for a kiss on the cheek but then just get the corner of the mouth instead. I thought, wow this girl has no co-ordination but she's bold and I like it.

I can only describe my first attraction to a girl as--well, you know that U-Haul joke? What do lesbians bring on a second date? I get it now. It was all-consuming. It's like driving a car with two gas pedals. Men are the breaks in relationships. Two excited women dating is a converted sprinter van careening through a vineyard out of control. All I wanted to do was touch her hand from across the table and watch her eyelashes flutter in the dim restaurant lighting. I was googly for her.

Everything was going so well for our first date, and we went to go see a classic first date movie, "Inglorious Bastards". I had not seen the trailer and Cassie told me it was a comedy. Anyone who's seen it knows she's playing fast and loose with the word "comedy". About ten minutes in, she leans over and whispers, "It gets funnier". And it did. And everything was cute and fine, and we were holding each other's pinky fingers on the arm rest. I'd never been so happy to be at .5 base.

I wish I could say I was too nervous to eat, but I can't turn down that theatre popcorn. It's like catnip or something. I know it's overpriced, I know it's going to give me gas, but I'm going to eat it anyway. Twice I've tried to not get it and ended up Jonesin' for it in the middle of the movie and getting up to get some anyway so now I don't even bother to resist.

Popcorn is the only food we eat that we don't care if it gets in our mouths. Which doesn't make sense due to the dollar to pop-kernel ratio. And we don't care. That's *why* they charge us \$18; because we smell it, and we have to have it and it costs \$18 and we say ok! I guess. But right off the bat, we're leaving trails of popcorn from concession to the theatre. It all starts with a teenager who overestimates the vessel of the popcorn, and fills the popcorn beyond the capacity of the little bag. We start by immediately losing men in the change of hands. And we're like, oh don't worry about it, there's more. No, don't pick it up. There's way more than we're ever going to need, leave it there. Then we sit down and just shovel it on in. Accuracy, not a problem, some of it's going to get in, and it's almost better if there are a few casualties because it's the easiest food to choke on and we're not chewing it at all. We get up after the film and just shake off

the excess and walk away. \$18! Sometimes you've also kicked the bag over during the movie-- don't even care. Don't even try to clean it up as it doesn't even register to us as food in the first place. But you drop *one* skittle...

My friend saw "IT" in theatres on a date. No thank you. They decided they wanted to see it in 4D. That's... too many D. He said there were smells and mist and the chair moved and everything and I'm like, I don't usually come here to be *in* the movie. I come here to watch you people deal with your impending doom for a few hours and then go home and check my apartment for murderers like every other 30-year old woman.

I live in a small apartment. My bedroom is in the kitchen and also the dining room. There's no place for a grown man to hide in my apartment; I can barely have guests over. They stand awkwardly in my bedroom-kitchen like, are we eating or fucking? The trick is, neither. So coming home at night the murderer check is pretty quick. (*opening a door*) nope. And if there was a tiny little murderer under my dresser, I could take him. I still check though. If I'm feeling really nervous I'll check the little drawers to point out how silly it is. But then I

snuggle into bed feeling all warm and comfy, and that's when the fear sets in. Like, I can feel someone watching me. *(quickly opening and closing eyes)* Oh—Nope. *(another check)* Nope What about n—*(quickly opening eyes)* Nope. There's no murderer *(check)* still. *(eyes closed tightly)* You just checked. Do not open your eyes again. At this point I'd rather be murdered in my sleep than be tired at work tomorrow. *(check)* Damn it! If there was a murderer, he would be murdering me right now. That's how I'd know. Unless he's watching me sleep until I open my eyes so that when I open them *(gasp, opening eyes)* Oh-Nope. And it goes on like that until I take a valium.

So then the movie's over and it's time to go to the bathroom. I would have read a pamphlet about lesbian bathroom etiquette had I anticipated that this would be an problem. But it wasn't until I was standing at the threshold of the bathroom that the questions came flooding in. Are we still on the date in here? Or on some sort of T.O.? Do I sit closer to her the more I like her? Or do I give her her space? So I eeny meeny miny moe'd it to pick a stall, and unscrewed my water bottle and poured water down the toilet to pretend like I was peeing because I was too embarrassed for her to hear me actually

pee, and then enthusiastically washed my hands for her and got the eff outta dodge. I haven't been to the bathroom on a date since 2007.

So were cuddling in our apartment the next day. And with a dude I would have just done this (*reaching over to put a hand in the middle of his chest*), but I go to do it and realize, that's second base, (*attempting to put the hand lower*) that's rounding third (*hand wandering upwards*) and that's her face, (*swiftly moving arm behind head*) so we're back to square one. Now I have questions like, is second base third base and will there be a bisexual playing short stop?

She and I broke up about a week later, and my mom found me crying on the stairs. "Again? Are we on some sort of gameshow? What's going on *now*?" Cassie went ahead and joined the navy without telling me and now she's gone. You'd think there was more to this story, but there isn't. One day, it was like, "Hey babe, wanna have dinner?" And she was like, "Can't, live on a boat now".

That didn't help with my mom's impression of lesbianism. To my mom, coming out was like revealing that I had some

sort of disease; something I was going to have to deal with over and over throughout my life—and in retrospect, she wasn't wrong. She was sad for me. She worried that I'd have a diminished quality of life if I lived like a gay, and she hoped that I would choose not to. Well I tried that, and it doesn't work. At the time, her reaction felt like a judgement about who I was; that she was sad and disappointed about who I was. But she didn't want that burden for me, and I think she was angry that I decided to go through with it anyway.

After Cassie, I went on a date with a girl named Victoria, I think. And her opener was, "I want you to know that my ex died of Lupus, and I'm totally over it". First of all, what is Lupus and no you're not. We talked the entire time about this dead girl. She ran through some pretty specific details of the funeral, like how she was buried in sweat pants and a ponytail with a Harry Potter wand in her hand. And while that's super sad, and kind of creative, we're on a first date. This is second date talk. Not only are we on the most depressing date possible, but we're wearing the same outfit. So I ask her where she got her black, three-quarter sleeve length fitted blazer and she said, "Banana Republic, where

did you get yours?” and I said, the lost and found. We didn’t go on a second date.

I’m meeting these girls on sites called, gays.com. On like, the dark web. At this time, dating apps didn’t exist, except for E-Harmony but their sophisticated algorithm couldn’t figure out the complex and nuanced pillars of attraction of same-sex aliens, and I definitely didn’t know any gay people in real life, so trying to find complete strangers in the internet wilderness was actually tumultuous. This is why gay communities exist; because you can’t function as a single gay running around, hoping to find another gays with no context, especially, when you look like this!

People tell me all the time that I don’t look gay. So if I want people to know I’m gay I have to tell them. I’ve come up with a number of strategies. One is to sneak it around a corner and just work it into a sentence. “Blah blah blah, I filled my taxes, I’m gay”. But that really stops people right in their tracks, like a fart that’s just a bit too loud. Sometimes when I’ve told people I’m gay they look at me like I’ve told them I’m a weekend heroin user, (*gentle strange gaze*) “Ooooooh, is that right?”. It’s actually shocking to some people. Like a

toilet seat that's a little lower than you expected. What's weird is that they know that there are gay people who exist; a lot of them, in fact, so why is it that they're *surprised* that I'm one of them? What criteria of gayness don't I meet that they're so damn *shocked*?

And they say, "Oh, well you don't look gay". OOOOH MY BAD, I guess. I'm not sure what you were expecting, but it would require some pretty serious flannel modifications to my daily routine for people to start pointing at me and pulling over their young children saying, "See, that's the lesbian I've been telling you about". Well, I'm here to clear something up; this is what gay people look like. We are hiding amongst you.

I've had to come up with a solution for us invisilez and it goes like this (*placing "L" on forehead*). Now, I found out that in the heterosexual world, this means something completely different. But I'm going with it. It goes like this:

You lock eyes.

(series of hand gestures on forehead throughout)

Lesbian. You? No? Okay.

I'm a lesbian. What? A lesbian. Nevermind.

Lesbian. You? Yes? Commere.

It's super practical but it really only works if we all do it.

Otherwise you'll have parents pulling over their children like,

“See, that's the loser I've been telling you about—except

she's wearing a lot of flannel, so it means something totally

different”. Actually, there's an easier trick. It's just this,

***(rolling up short-sleeve t-shirt)*. You could also do up all the**

front buttons on your plaid shirt. Or wear a single ring on

your thumb. Get gels on 8 of your fingers.

I've always heard that cutting your nails is really important if

you're a lesbian, but I've never been with anyone who wanted

to be fingered. Except one girl one time with one finger and

she didn't want it to move. Is this right? Is this what you

want?

So I go ahead and catch myself another girlfriend, Holly. She

emailed me a video of herself to prove she was real, after

meeting on the early years of Plenty of Fish. At this time, my

mom is still struggling with the idea that I'd want to have sex

with a woman, and we're not allowed to stay at her house, so

we go over to my dad's across the street for our little gaycation. My dad, by this time, has taken a keen interest in my homosexuality and was giving me clippings of gay people doing things in the news. "Look Laura, the dykes are on bikes now. Are you going to attend?" No, not this year. He quickly turned into an "If it makes you happy, I'm happy" kind of dad, which is nice, even if his execution is a little off. I think his reaction to my coming out was more about the irony of the divorce than anything else, but it sure felt personal at the time.

Holly was the first girl I dated who was closeted, but wouldn't be the last. She refused to hold my hand in public because everyone was staring at her, and we weren't allowed to even say the word "gay" in front of her parents lest they figure it out. I think us spending all night in her room with the door closed gave it away, but what do I know?

She and I had been dating long distance for about 3 weeks when I said, "Hey, want to come to Europe with me for a month?" And she was like, "Oh, I don't know..." and I was like "No, seriously! It'll be fun! We'll get to know each

other!”. It was not fun. We broke up in three countries. Then kept getting back together because we shared a shower.

One night she said to me, “I lub you”. And I was like, What? You do!? Ooooooh! And she was like, “No-no, lub, with a “b”. It’s like before loving you. It’s lub”. Oh. Thank you. That’s so nice.

I made her a cake once, as a gift. I don’t cook or bake at all because I’m nervous, don’t like following directions, and distract easily. So I actually had a friend supervise me while I did it because I’m worried there’s a real possibility I could kill her with this cake. And I put a little “A+” on it in icing because the cake was a congratulations present for getting her first teaching job. And she was like, “You didn’t make this cake”. And I thought she was flattering me like, wow this cake looks good, you did that?! No, she was saying, “You didn’t make this cake”. What she was telling me was that she thought I was the kind of person who pretends to make someone a cake. And I was like, no you asshole, I was being *CUTE*. She didn’t eat it. Which actually worked out better for me because I ate the whole thing and that Betty Crocker shit is good.

If you're about to break up with someone, don't go to Ikea. Even if they say--especially if they say, they're just going in for one thing, don't. This is not some, "500 Days of Summer" shit. You're fucked as soon as you walk in. It all starts with the little pencil. At first it's kinda fun, but there's a reason pencils aren't this size all the time. These details, they wear away at you. Here's an office chair not covered in cat hair. A kitchen sink that you can see the bottom of. A towel, on a rack, that's dry. And over here we have cabinets that aren't full of your mother's second-hand pottery that you think is vintage so you won't throw it out even though it's covered in sticky dust so it's unusable. And here's a king-sized bed; of which, I'd be allotted just enough space to perform my rotisserie chicken routine all night, while you spread eagle with all of the duvet.

I've been in 3 Pride parades. All by accident. The first one was in my university town of Antigonish, Nova Scotia. The parade was so sparse I didn't realize I was in it; I thought I was just walking down the street in a line until someone threw garbage at us from their porch. Some people waved, that was nice. The second was in Rome. We knew it was

Pride week and Holly and I went to watch the parade. As it passed, we realized that people were just joining in at the end so we went along with them. It was nice to see her *out*. We held hands as we walked past the Colosseum and I thought, "Wow, how far we've come". At the end of the road, we were met by armed guards with rifles. They circled around us and made everyone take off every ounce of gay before leaving the parade; lest we offend the Pope. Rome has one gay street with a handful of restaurants and hotels for queer people. But that was 10 years ago so, maybe there's 2 streets, now. Then I was in Toronto Pride parade 2012. I had just decided I was going to get back into performing after taking some time to do my university degree. I was nervous and scared and they put me in a Caribana bikini. Well kid, I hope you're ready 'cause now you're naked and in a parade.

I'm not even gay. I just like that word more than all the other words. Seems friendliest. I'm technically pansexual. And to answer your next question, no not an attraction to cooking-wear; which would be tiresome. Why doesn't she write? He's so cold.

When I came out to my mom as pan (*this is my second time coming out to her*), she said, "...What's that?". I tried to explain that gender was just a social construct, and that there are people who don't place themselves on the binary, or who don't believe in the binary at all, and I looked at my mom's face and realized that she's like 7 conversations away from being able to understand the words I'm saying. Binary means numbers 0 and 1 to her. She does a lot of math. I have no idea how to get her from where she is, to where I am, but I can't burst into the conversation starting with how her reaction supports the goals of patriarchy because she doesn't know what that is. She knows the effects of it, being a woman in business, but it's like explaining quantum physics to an 8th grader. You can't start with, "There are these things we can't see. Not ghosts. Maybe ghosts". You have to start with, "There are things". So I just planted the best seed I could and said, I know it seems like a bizarre word but it just means I'm attracted to adult, human beings... with a lot of money. No, that's not part of it, that's just me. And she said, "Oh, so it could be a guy?" Or a girl. "But maybe a guy!" Or girl or "Or?!" ...Maybe...Technically.. "Great! So you're sayin' there's a chance!". I thought, did that go well?

I didn't have to come out to my Italian side of the family. My cousin leaned over at dinner once and said, "Just so you know, we all know, and nobody cares". Is that...good? I never did follow up with anyone so I still don't know how they feel. I guess I don't care. If it's not acceptance, at least it was easy.

I'm glad, for visibility, that they added the P in the acronym. So now we've got, LGBTTQP-R...ESPECT. Is that right? Look at all those categories, it's like 17 letters dedicated to just not being straight. It's straight people vs the world! And still, with all these "other" categories, these hetero-alternatives, we live in a world where the assumption is straight until proven gay.

And *why* do we need to have all these words and definitions? Because straight society demands that non-straight people explain themselves! Explain your weird-ass self to us! And then come up with a name for it, "*lesbian*" so it sounds a bit like a disease, or a poorly performing racing horse breed, and you feel a little bit bad about yourself every time you say

it. Straight people are like, “Hey, wh-what’s that thing you’re doing there? What’s the word for that?”

Girls can get away with being heteroflexible and everyone thinks it’s hot and no one beats her up outside of the bar. But a guy has sex with another man one time and now he’s GAY. We skip straight past bi as a possibility because in women it’s invalid because it’s for attention, and in men it’s invalid because it’s a gateway drug to gay. Every identity has a unique kind of phobia used against them. I’ve been accused of encouraging a homosexual agenda; which is actually a day planner that at the top of every day just says, “Be gay”, and on Sunday it says “Brunch”.

When I started coming out to more people; my secondary and tertiary friends, I was suddenly becoming phased out of friendships with people who had partners. I became some sort of sexual threat to everyone. Again, am I giving off that vibe? Boys think I’m converting their girlfriends in the bathroom. Girls think he’s converting me in the bathroom. People I cared about deeply couldn’t see past the sexual aspect of my identity, which made it even more difficult to take on the label and accept myself. Lesbian, bisexual.

Because, in fact, I'm barely sexual at all. And my biggest misunderstanding of homosexuality, that the church was really pushing, is that sex was at the forefront, and that's why it was dirty.

Then I wondered if I had an obligation to come out; to make my intentions known to other women in vulnerable situations. Like the locker room. Does everyone need to know I'm gay just in case they'd rather cover up? Is it predatory for me not to mention it? Or is it homophobic of them to assume everyone here is straight? How the turns have tabled. But I think that gay women, knowing what it feels like to be preyed upon like that, just don't do it in these situations. It's like, no one should be asking you out while you're getting out of a wet bathing suit. What a horrible, sticky, folded mess that is. Now is not the time. Women have a much better sense of that. We want to catch you at your best.

So next I dated a guy and my parents were like, "Let's meet him!". It was like I had undone my coming out. We were back to straight. The heterostasis. A collective relieved breath from the family for having made it safely out of the gay zone.

For whom has this really been a phase? How many straight people are there out there who thought they were gay for a minute and ended up being like, whoops! That wasn't for me at all.

This new boyfriend had a very pretty face and was a bit of a hypochondriac. He was three years younger than me and I felt like his mother. Like his lesbian mother. At one point, he called me on the phone and said, "What if we spent less time together?" I said, what if we spent *no* time together? He pretended to be vying for quality over quantity, and since at this point, the only response to "I love you" had been, "No you don't." I gave it another chance.

We broke up a month later because he was telling me the most interesting story in the most boring way. It had murder and deceit and all sorts of twists, and as he's droning on and on all I can think of is, I can't live the rest of my life like this! That was one of my healthiest relationships.

After having some experience dating both women and men, I can safely say that in general, the problem is that, men are stupid and women are insane. Men get in trouble in

relationships because they don't know things they're definitely supposed to know; birthdays, anniversaries, fatal allergies. Too dumb to commit it to memory, and too lazy to set an alarm. But women-- are insane. Ever get into a fight with a woman? She remembers that thing you told her 7 months ago that was profoundly painful for you to admit and she's been saving it for this moment to bring it up and ruin your life. A man will forget your birthday, but a woman will diagnose you with a mental disorder on the 4th date and tell you it's ok, she'll take care of you. What's your SIN number? But people still ask me, who's better? Guys or girls? And, I cannot tell you. No that's a lie, it's boobs.

Almost every girl I've dated has been seriously sexually assaulted. That's not so much a joke, as it is just true. A lot of people's first response is, oh, that's what made them gay. That they switched in order to be safe from men. Which implies that being gay would have stopped them from being assaulted in the first place. But it wouldn't have because it didn't. Lesbians aren't damaged straight girls. In fact their assault has nothing to do with being gay and everything to do with being a woman who said no.

So knowing that, and looking back to what I just said, maybe we're all *insane* because people keep fucking with us and we've had to build all these crazy, make-shift barriers around ourselves to stay safe. *Maybe* as a gender, we've been driven to insanity because to trust someone with our heart means to trust them with our life. I don't know a single man who couldn't kick my ass. Without even trying. My brother, who hasn't worked out a day in his life, can do ten pull-ups. He discovered it one day while bored on the subway. I've been training to do a pull-up for 5 years and I can do half of one. I will admit the training hasn't been consistent, but my point still stands.

This guy I know, barely, from a show I did once, I think, sends me messages professing his love to me in the middle of the night, every 6 months or so. I've ignored them all. On May 3rd he wrote to me, "I love you" at 2:34am. Then at 3:51am wrote "Supportively, not romantically". Oh few, you really saved yourself there. I totally believe you. No need to clarify further, I actually assumed that's what you meant. That's a totally normal thing to say at that hour. Messaging me at 2:30 in the morning; what kind of disrespect is that? You don't have a crush on me, I'm just some idea you have

that you latch onto when you're drunk and alone. (*scoff*) "I love you". What's my middle name!?

As if telling him I'm a lesbian would matter. These people are invited in by lesbianism. Somehow the only thing that could not possibly involve them, still somehow is for them. They're so jealous of us that somehow they've convinced themselves that this is that they want. **YES! LESBIANS!** I feel completely inadequate and I love it! Thank you for lesbianing for me. You must think I'm so hot for you to be doing that. This is all because of me. Wow, I'm good.

One time, the owner of a gymnastics gym was being real friendly with me, wanting to show me all these floor acrobatic partnering moves. A girl my age actually came up to me to warn me about him being a perv. About 30 minutes later he's asked me out on a date. I said, "noooo", and we continued doing some acro. Well, I felt a fart coming on. Not a bum fart, a vagina fart. And there ain't nothin' you can do about a vagina fart. The acrobatics came to its final pose (*deep squat*) and I quieffed a long, airy quief, with a sustained vibrato, directly into his mouth.

Let me tell you, it did not deter him. This man continued to flirt with me, follow me and partner acro with me for the rest of the day. What's a girl gotta do to turn off the sex appeal? These people cannot be shaken off. The most dangerous place to be is in the forefront of some deranged man's mind.

That's not to say that women can't be dangerous. I dated a nurse a few years back, and that bitch bit me; in the thigh, vertically, and on my stomach. She left a mark that a crime scene investigator would have been able to match her dental records to. But when I tell people she bit me they're like, "Ooooh she bites eh? That's hot". No, asshole, that's assault. Even violence in lesbian relationships is sexy somehow. I didn't even consider going to the police because I was not in the Goddamn mood to deal with whatever little "questions" they might have. Also I was traumatized because of how much she seemed to delight in my pain and discomfort in my inability to leave. I was forced to stay until sunup planning, in detail, the child we would have together, and how maybe we could move to Brazil. This was our third date.

I reflected on how she perfected the abuse to both be “mistaken” as a consensual kinky lesbian activity, but also position the bites so that there’s no way it would feel pleasurable for me. The only silver lining was that she was wasted and showed too many of her cards too early. She’s clearly done this before, and if she was in her right mind, she would have played this nice and slow so I wouldn’t even know what was happening. I’d be three kids in, living in Sao Paulo before I realized she was insane.

I should have known something as up when I met her friend. I was telling a story and said, I was being followed by this guy, and he interrupted, “You mean you *thought* you were being followed”. Like I must have been confused. Like its more possible to him that I don’t know how to recognize being followed, than that a *man* would *follow* a woman. No, I very clearly know the difference between someone going about their day, and someone going about *my* day.

For a while after that I dated no one. For 5 years I was a lone wolf and I loved it. I loved it more than any relationship I’d ever had. After a few years of no sex I thought to myself, am I ace? Is this what asexuality is? Wow, I’m really making my

way through the letters. At one point I thought, I'd have sex with myself. Yeah! But that's not asexuality, that's just narcissism. I'd date myself. But I would be a huge pain in the ass.

But I get what it means to be ace now; I could go the rest of my life never having sex again, and that would be perfectly fine with me. I don't need it. I don't go looking for it, and I'm completely indifferent to having it. It's good when I do, and fine when I don't. Would I miss boobs? Perhaps I would. Would I miss the peen? No, I merely tolerate the peen. It's not my favourite.

Although, I have more sex with guys than girls. It's way easier. In every respect of the word. The pieces fit, you've both read the instructions and there's only 2 steps; it's very cut and dry what everybody expects as your basic sex. Then you can branch out, but there's a clear play we all just know about. It's 11, 84, 69. With women, you gotta really pay attention. Eyes, ears; open, telepathy; on. Listen to her, respond to her, *be* her. Assemble the clues of her enjoyment and develop a detailed and scaffolded plan to be carried out on just the right timeline.

I'd rather date a woman than a man. But I'd rather marry a man. That's surprising to me. Well, no, actually, the truth is, I want to have a wedding with a man, for the aesthetic, and then be married to a woman. Something about the dichotomy of men marrying women really appeals to me. I don't know if it's leftover heteronormativity from my childhood or if this is just my aesthetic, but I want those photos.

So what do I call myself now? Pan, ace, gay, lesbian? Every time I choose one, other people in that group go, "You're not one of us, you're breaking the rules!". So we just keep adding words to define ourselves when none of them really fit. So now I just identify as the plus sign at the end.

If I had it my way, we wouldn't come out at all. We'd just show up to Christmas dinner and say, this is who I'm dating now.

We all have these horrible coming out stories that we tell over and over again and one day it clicked; what if we stopped doing that? Why do I owe people this *confession*? This shouldn't be news at all. I'm just going to bring a girl home and they can figure out if I'm gay or not. Let them do

the work. What am I doing feeding into this heteronormative bullshit with my sweat and tears.

And the queer community romanticizes it; maybe as a way to reclaim it. But let's get rid of this hetero-imposed "rite of passage" altogether. There is nothing more heteronormative than the expectation of LGBTQ+ people to come out. Straight people demand that queers identify themselves so that they may begin their formal oppression. Queer people are obligated to opt into oppression by admitting their difference, starting with their friends and family.

The formality of coming out keeps straight people afraid of branching out. Any move on their part requires a new designation of "no longer one of us". It keeps people from exploring parts of themselves because of the fear of losing their position as default human. One false move and you're gonna need a parade.

Then there's this hidden resentment among the Queer community for Queers in straight relationships who don't share in that oppression because they aren't visibly Queer. Their Queer status is questioned, their loyalty is questioned,

and there's an expectation that they should put themselves in harm's way in order to claim a proper Queer with a capital "Q" identity.

We've been reduced to our stats: Hi there, I'm a pan, demi-sexual, gender-indifferent, homo-romantic cis person.

(pause) Ma'am, this is a Pizza Hut.

When you come out, even the well-meaning straight people centre it about themselves. They sit with you sympathetically while you come out, and sob, and confess all of your crushes, starting at age of 6... They sit there as if they're entitled to an explanation but feel bad that you have to do it. That's not quite what we're looking for in "acceptance".

When I first came out to my family, my aunt came up to me—in my family, we have a designated talker. My aunt handles the "talking", she's "good at it". She sat down with me very gently and said, "So what's this all about?". And she listened to me explain, and asked a lot of thoughtful and gentle questions. About the minutia of my sexual identity and history, and future relationship goals—WHY AM I TELLING

HER THIS? This is none of her business! I didn't have to explain any of this when I was straight. But she thinks she's doing the good thing. And at the time, I thought she was, too. So there's no blame there. We both grew up in a society where non-strait, non-cis people OW US AN EXPLANATION! Why are you different from me? Tell me your most vulnerable secrets so I can decide if I can be on board. Again, not her fault. She was taught that this was a very bad thing and she's trying to understand how it's not so she can relinquish herself of being concerned for me, and just accept it and be happy.

But it's messed up that we go through that. And even, that we go along with it so willingly. We even celebrate it now with Coming Out Day. Now, I'm divided. One half of me is like, yes, reclaim it. And for many people, and in many cultures, "coming out" is very much still going to be a thing for another century or so, so we need to support and celebrate the people who are still stuck in that paradigm, and are brave enough to break through. But let's also maybe make the argument of fuck coming out, don't let them put you *in* in the first place. Skip it. Just don't do it. Walk in holding her hand and they can Google what it means.

The whole time I wasn't dating anyone, I went into some sort of gay remission. For years everyone assumed I was straight because I was single. My gayness seemed to depend on some kind of external evidence. It took a while before I realized how damaging it was to my sense of self that a huge part of my identity was being ignored by so many people in my life. When people treated me like a straight girl, I started feeling like a straight girl, and I was closeted all over again. I have to keep coming out to remind people I'm gay, to remind myself. I didn't want to have to succumb to wearing rainbow suspenders or shaving one side of my head, but I needed to find a way to be culturally gay to support my identity. The answer, was softball.

In a league that should be called "Lez Play Ball" but for some reason, isn't, is where I met my girlfriend, Margaret. The main difference between women-only and co-ed leagues is the amount of apologies. Every throw—Sorry! Oh, sorry that was bad. Missed that one, sorry! Men just throw the damn thing and shift the responsibility of catching it to someone else. Not his problem, he did his part. That and the compliments

from 3rd base coach. I like those shorts.

My dad came to one of our games, because now I'm the son he's always wanted, and he said, "I was talking to these two ladies and they were going on vacation together, do you think they're a couple?". Did they have matching folding chairs?

Margaret hasn't been "out" insofar as it's been none of anyone's business. But now that we're together, she's decided to share. Coming out in the 2020's is a trip. No one cares. Just, congratulations! And *pff* handful of glitter appears and we all move on with our day. Everyone she's come out to has all said the same thing, "I'm so happy for you". And she's like, what the fuck?. I've been keeping this to myself for 30 years and you're just *happy for me?! But* that's our generation now. No one cares if you're an L or a G. B and T are still having a hard time and people are still trying to figure out what the Q, the 2 and the A's stand for. Even Margaret's parents, who are first generation Canadians just said, "Ok". What a turnaround.

I feel like I'm being gaslit a little bit. Like, I was told this was a big deal, is it not? The Ontario Arts Council recently removed LGBT+ from their list of priority groups, presumably because we are no longer considered by them to be repressed enough to qualify. I was writing a grant, starting as I usually do, "As a queer wom—" oh, it's gone. Are we over it? I'm not done being over it. I am not done lamenting on my difficult childhood. I am not done cashing in on this oppression to be pushed to the front of the line. Give me money for my struggles! I got about five minutes to revel in how brave I was for overcoming adversity and now I'm redundant. Unbelievable.

Margaret and I are about the same size so cuddling has been kind of funny. We're both like, yeah, totally climb on up. (*struggling*) Nevermind. Too heavy. We also got into this practice of picking each other up and doing squats. It started because we had this conversation like, could you drag me out of a burning building? The answer is no. Absolutely not. Right now we're at one squat. A single squat and she got up there herself, and is really holding on.

Now that I'm in a healthy relationship our biggest problem, in addition to our impending fiery death, is the habit of answering a question with a question. Where do you want to eat? Where do *you* want to eat? Do you want to put more ranch on this salad? Do *you* want to put more ranch on this salad? I think it's obvious that I do. So our biggest problem we have is that we're starving.

I might be gender indifferent. I've been subtly going by "she/they" for a while, mostly in my Instagram bio and email signatures, but I'm doing it. No one has yet to call me "they", probably because they think I'm faking it; that I don't really mean it and I'm doing it to be inclusive, but I'm dying for someone to give it a try so I can see how it fits. I also thought about what I'd be like if I was called "he/him". And I think I kinda like that, too. HIM. That's a kind of power I've been missing. *He* made the suggestion, *his* car is on fire, *he* picked the kids up from daycare. But then I thought, it would upset me if no one called me "her" ever again. There's something I very much like about being perceived as a woman and I wouldn't want to give it up. *She* is funny as fuck.

On our first date, which Margret doesn't recognize as a date, because, to be fair, I didn't tell her it was a date, we had the discussion about identity. We both landed as somewhere between ace and pan. It could be anybody, but probably nobody. Pan-ace: maybe anyone, probably no one.

I recently learned about the term, omnisexual. And I'm that, too. I read the definition of these things and I think, "I could do that". But WHY do I feel the need to do this? Half of me is like, shut up, and the other half of me is like, *(typing)* "As an omnisexual, a-gender, lesbian...". I have to know. I have to know what I am. Straight people already know. They are incredibly confident about it. I admire that.

Before I met Margaret, I flew to New York to have a lunch date with Kate McKinnon; from SNL. I figure, step one, get on the plane. Step two, wander around New York keeping an eye out, really making direct eye contact with everyone on the street, to check. You know, really blend in in New York. And what happened, was that I did not find her and we did not have lunch. I flew home the next day.

Seeing gayness in public was so rare when I was younger that when I did see it, I'd think **"OMG! GAY!"** and I'd make a point of making eye contact and smiling so they would know that I really wanted them to feel good about themselves. And now that I'm walking around holding Margaret's hand, I'm recognizing those smiles in others. Sometimes I see parents of young kids giving me the pleasant side eye and alternating looks with their kids like, look, this could be you, if you want. Look how totally ok with it I am. This is fine! And the kid's like, I know mom. Jackson has 2 dads and 3 niblings.

The other day, I saw a kid draped in flags so I yelled, **"Happy Pride!"**. And they said, are you proud, too? I am. And they said, **"What sexuality are you?"** And I thought, well I've never had this conversation with a stranger child before so I'm going to go with **"Queer"**. **"I go by Queer, how about you?"** And she said, boldly, *(flapping back her rainbow cape)* **"I'm a LESBIAN!"**. And I don't know how that conversation ended because I was crying. They get to just grow up like that. And they won't have to do any of this shit. Little fucks. No, I couldn't be happier.

I was hiking in Newfoundland last summer when I ran into two couples in their early 50's. We got chatting about our lives and I was saying, my girlfriend Margaret is a designer, my girlfriend Margaret is meeting me at the end of the trail in St. John's...and about 10km into a 17km hike, one of them stopped walking and turned around like, "Wait, do you mean *girlfriend* or *girlfriend*? Girlfriend. "OOOOH. This whole time you were saying girlfriend I thought you meant girlfriend. Well, there's nothing wrong with that".

I know. It was kind of charming even though it was a bit offensive. I appreciate that he thinks he's ahead of his time, letting me know that it's ok to be gay. And even though it feels a little bit condescending, he really meant it. He really wanted me to know it was ok. He (*quite accurately, actually*) assumed that at some point in my life, I was sure that it was not. And he was making a point of making eye contact and smiling. No one else said anything about it so I can only assume they think I'm just their new gay Come From Away friend.

It's a bit frustrating when people assume I mean friend who's a girl when I say girlfriend. Do I read as a waspy 50-year old

woman? (*rich voice*) Ha-ha! Oh, did I tell you? My girlfriend and I finger-banged all Thursday night. *Girlfriend*. Am I not saying it right? Is there a gayer way to say it?

Later in the trip I was hitch-hiking with a woman and the topic of my husband came up. She told me that her entire family had watched me hike past their house the night before, and they all had a fun little discussion about me marrying her son. She asked me if I had a husband or a boyfriend and I said no. I started to tell her about my girlfriend and in the last second, I called her my friend. Why do I do this? What am I so afraid of? That she won't *like* me anymore? That she'll stop the car in the middle of the highway and make me get out? I think about the threat of opting into discrimination all the time, and I'm so afraid of the consequences. Not danger, though, I'm afraid they won't *like* me anymore. How pathetic. I just go ahead and hide behind my straight white girl façade whenever I want and come out when it conveniences me. Before the guilt of having just done that even sinks in, I'm immediately punished with the feeling of having shoved myself back in the closet. You want to feel safe? Liked? Then you can stay in here as long as you want.

Maybe I'm the one with the prejudice. I'm talking to a white, small-town woman so she must be homophobic? Is this some sort of heterophobia? Am I the bad guy in this story?

There's one person in my life who I still haven't come out to. Maria. As you may recall, my mother went back to work shortly after having me and welcomed Maria into our home to take care of me. She's a first-generation Portuguese woman in her 70's who calls me Luringa when I'm bad.

***(exasperated)* Ahhh! Luringa! Don't feel bad for her, she has a summer house in the Azores. Maria speaks English in a way that only my brother and I understand. She has taken care of me my entire life, and we have never had a conversation lasting longer than 5 minutes. Her love for me is felt, not heard. It is understood by me on such a profound level and I cannot afford to lose it. I have no idea what her beliefs are. I could not even guess what kind of reaction she might have if I brought Margaret over to meet her. But I can't risk it. I can't even begin to process how devastating a loss that would be for me. Even if she doesn't react badly; even if it's just a slight withdrawal of her love, I'll feel it, and I'll know**

it was my fault. I'll know I could have kept it if I kept my mouth shut.

Even after everything I said about going in holding her hand and let those fuckers figure it out, there are some circumstances that just stop me dead in my tracks and remind me that I am vulnerable. Am I willing to risk losing her love, to love someone else? To love myself?

Everyone preaches about self-love. It's instructional, "love yourself!" But they don't know what to do with it when you get there. Because, to the untrained eye, self-love looks a lot like arrogance. Especially if you're a woman. These very thoughtful people desperately want you to be en route to self-love, but they have no idea what to do when you say, "I'm there". As if maybe attaining it wasn't the goal. They only wanted to give the advice, they didn't think it would *work*. You're not praised for achieving self-love, you're praised for attempting it and not having it. It's like when people say, "we should hang out". You're not going to hang out, but the thought of it was enough.

More people have criticized me for my self-love than for my self-hate. People definitely liked me more when I didn't like myself. But it turns out, that's not my problem. Don't get it confused that I think I'm better than anyone else, I don't. I don't have to like myself the best to love myself the most.

I flew my Pride flag for the first time this year. My dad gave it to me a while back and I hadn't put it out yet because I'm like, eh, I'm not really a flag person. But the pandemic has made us live a little bit more public with ourselves. We've been kept from each other for so long, we've started communicating by dressing-up our windows; signaling things to others at a distance. Remember the signs at the beginning of the pandemic? Shops with hand written notes of concern and hope taped to their doors? We will see you again soon. We were all on the same page for like, 2 weeks and then shit hit the fan.

Putting the Pride flag up has been a beacon. My neighbours in the apartment across from me took a picture of themselves with it; not at all subtly. People wish me happy Pride from their balconies; they do that little nod, that little wave. The flag is an invitation; a signal that you belong here.

You can come to me. When you put that out there, “You can come to me”, people do.

They made me take it down; the super of the apartment building I live in. I know, I know, I want to blame them for being homophobes, too but it was a straight-up fire hazard, that flag was huge. Dad does not skimp on his gifts.

Now that enough time has passed, my parents buy me rainbow socks and flannel for Christmas. My family comes to my Queer shows, make an effort to learn about pronouns and attempt to understand gender. When talking about relationships my mom says, “him...or her” and with every passing year, the pause gets shorter. Once a year my dad sends me a text that says, “Happy Cinco de Mayo”. Last year, my mom sent one, too but she’s a classic boomer so it says “Happy Cinco de Mayo, dot dot dot”. So it still has a bit of an edge. When we have dinner mom asks, “Is this going in your stand-up comedy?” and I keep saying no, but now that I think about it, yes. She knew I was lying, and that is why she’s not here.

As it turns out, I don't need a girl on my arm, or rainbow socks or plaid shirt to validate who I am. I don't need a prop next to me with a big flashing arrow that says, "Lesbian Here". I'm enough. I was denied my identity for so long I felt like I needed proof of it to really exist; maybe not even to prove it to others, but to myself. I come out to me every single day, and I'm getting louder and louder. The microphone helps.

(lights out)

(lights up, curtain call)

Thank you for coming out.

(lights out)