



Love
is
Love

METTE
BACH

When you find the one who sees you for who you really are

Love is Love

Insecure about her body and unhappy at home, Emmy will do anything to make herself more likeable. After rumours spread about Emmy's sexual experience with a popular classmate, she decides to leave her home in Winnipeg to stay with her uncle's family in Vancouver. Her cool, sophisticated cousin Paige introduces Emmy to transgender Jude and Emmy is instantly attracted to him.

Emmy is never sure where she stands with Jude, and can't believe that such a confident, charismatic guy might actually be interested in her. Both her mother and Paige warn her away from Jude, saying that he will just use her and she will get hurt. But as Emmy gets to know Jude and his story, she realizes it's worth it to put your true self out there for real love.

METTE BACH was born in Denmark and raised in Delta, B.C. She lives in Vancouver where she teaches ESL to high school students. She is the author of the Lorimer teen novels *Femme* and *Killer Drop*.

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Real Love

a new collection of YA novels

RL 4.0 | Teen fiction

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Someone Like You

IT WAS 4:24 IN THE MORNING. Emmy sat down in a stairwell just off Osborne. There was some cardboard there, left by someone else. Ty seemed happy enough with that. Emmy felt the relief in her feet first, the warmth that gathered there after a whole night of walking. Ty put his arm around her, pulled her in close, and kissed the back of her head. It was a dream, this night. Being here with Ty.

Ty Biggs was not someone Emmy would normally

talk to. She wouldn't even dream of hanging out with him. But now here she was — his maybe-girlfriend. Ty didn't commit. Everyone knew that. But did he kiss the back of every girl's head?

She looked out at the street. Winnipeg's Osborne Village looked different at this hour. The streetlights looked like squished together moons held up on podiums.

Emmy's stomach rumbled and she hoped Ty hadn't heard it. But he must have, because he reached into his backpack and pulled out a half-eaten hoagie from earlier that night. In the bright lights of the 7-Eleven, Emmy had opted for just an apple. Big mistake. She knew it would never last her through the night, but she couldn't eat in front of Ty. There was no way she could force anything down. Even sitting on the stairs, ravenous and cold, she almost said no to his offer. But he peeled back the plastic wrap and took a big bite, then passed it to her. The smell of ham and yellow mustard was too much to resist. She took a small bite and chewed slowly.

“So what now?” she asked when the sandwich was done.

He shrugged. “Not sure. You sleepy?”

“Me? No. Not after all that coffee we drank.”

“That stuff doesn’t affect me.”

“That’s cool.” Emmy held on to Ty’s arm as he reached around her. She patted his forearm like they were an old married couple. Was that cool? She tried to pretend that she had done this sort of thing before.

She reached into her purse and took out her notebook, handling it gently, like a precious jewel. It was the first time she considered opening it for anyone and she had gone over the scene so many times. In her fantasy, she was always at the swingset in the park. Ty was pushing her gently back and forth as he asked to see it.

“Sometimes I write poems,” Emmy said now, the book in her hand. She had dog-eared the page she wanted to show Ty, the lines she felt best revealed her. “Would you like me to read you one?”

Ty looked puzzled. “Maybe after. Er, later.”

He took her face in his hands and cupped it between his palms. Emmy felt like a chipmunk with his hands enfolding the roundness of her rosy cheeks.

Ty kissed her. Then he unzipped his baggy jeans and offered himself. He didn't have to say a word. She knew what he wanted. As she bent over, she thought about the elite group she was joining. All the girls who had blown Ty had moved up several rungs on the school social ladder.

Emmy hoped it was safe, that he wouldn't give her HPV like in those awful pamphlets at the school nurse's office. But what was the worst that could happen? Would a visit to the doctor be any more shameful than showing her face at school week after week with no stories to tell, no one talking about her? Emmy had nothing worth noting about her except for her dead dad, last year's fashion, and her muffin top. And no one cared about any of that stuff.

Ty leaned back and guided her face downward. She opened her mouth and did what she figured she was supposed to do. Was he into it? She couldn't tell.

She wanted him to be. She wanted some hint that she was doing it right. She wanted to hear moaning, but he didn't make a sound. Even a thumbs up would have been better than the torment of his silence.

Emmy's neck was sore when Ty pushed her away. He took over himself, his eyes focused on the wall behind her. Finally, there was a quiet grunt followed quickly by the zip of his jeans.

He didn't ask to hear a poem. Emmy watched the darkness fade. She listened to the first sounds of the morning. She heard the cars of people going to work, living their sad little lives. Emmy didn't think she would feel so empty after such a big deal. All she could think about was the list of girls she knew had been with Ty. Sure, they'd become more popular. But she realized for the first time, and a little too late, they were all thinner than Emmy. They were all prettier than she was.

Ty's arms were around her. But all she could think about was how she'd tell her friends. Or would they somehow just magically know? Could you tell from looking when a girl had crossed that line?

At 6:17 in the morning, Emmy's phone buzzed. It was so loud it woke Ty before Emmy could find it in the depths of her big pleather purse. It was her mom. Emmy could tell she was frantic, even via text.

"Where the hell are you?"

Emmy was tempted to ignore it. Why should she answer? It was always the same thing anyway. Everything she did was wrong, so why even bother to try explaining?

The phone rang.

"Who is it?" Ty stretched and scratched his chest.

There was no way Emmy was going to talk to her mom with Ty right there, so she turned the phone to silent. Instead of answering, she texted back.

"Slept at Tiana's last night. Heading to school now. Sorry."

Instantly, a reply appeared.

"We need to talk. Tonight. Be there."

Her mom was quick on the draw, she'd give her that much.

Emmy put her phone in her bag. She managed

to doze for half an hour in Ty's arms. Then he woke her up and told her he needed to go home and change before school. She was tempted to do the same, but she knew if she went home she'd crawl into bed and her mom would add skipping school to the list of wrongs. Instead, she went alone to Stella's Café for an order of toast and jam.

At school, Emmy told her closest girlfriends, Michelle and Tiana, about her night. They looked at her like she was totally clueless.

"Ty Biggs is a disgusting pervert," Michelle said. "You should not be spending time with him. He fingered Rochelle right in Math class."

"Yeah, Emmy," Tiana agreed. "He's not quality."

"That thing with Rochelle was just a rumour," Emmy insisted. Somehow she'd convinced herself they'd be impressed. How could she have gotten it so wrong? Now all she wanted was a shower and a chance to start the day over.

"Why would Rochelle say it happened if it didn't?" Michelle asked. "I mean, girls don't make

stuff like that up. Ty would. But Rochelle wouldn't."

Emmy didn't want to listen. Rochelle looked like a model and never talked to any of them.

"Yeah, Emmy," Tiana said again. "You can do better than Ty Biggs."

Easy for them to say, thought Emmy. Up to now, Emmy claimed to be holding out for someone special. Maybe Ty was an idiot, but he was willing to put his arms around her. For now, that was something.