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# PG to Rated A: An Asexual's Journey Through Love & Life

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## By Tatianna Dugué

### Not Another Happy Ending

Everything I ever knew about love growing up was from movies. Even as I grew out of the fairytales and cheesy rom-coms, my perception of love was still the same. This story, though, doesn't end with the guy getting the girl or even the girl getting the other girl; this story isn't about what movies taught me —it's about what they didn't and how I learned to once again find myself in them.

During my PG years, I learned love was about holding hands and quick kisses with lots of blushing. Love was about sacrifice, like losing your voice to gain legs. As a five year old, this was the kind of love I could get behind, looking for frogs to kiss or for someone to hold my hand. I wanted my life to be a movie, and I thought it would be. I thought that everyone got their happy ending, and I had to just wait a little longer to have my own.

When I turned twelve, everything in my life began to change. In a span of a couple of years, I had experienced my first sexual trauma, my first break-up, boobs with a new awkward body, and a new school. Harshened by the realities of real life, and detached from the PG experiences of my youth, **my life slowly took on a new rating**. I watched as PG-13 movies changed my perception of

love and life. It was more complex, **love became more physical**. Kissing and touching would intensify before the screen would fade to black, leaving the viewer's imagination to do the work.

However, leaving things up to my imagination frightened me; paired with recent sexual trauma and the crudeness of teenage boys, I began to worry what the next few scenes of the movie and of my life would be. **I became secluded. I stopped watching romantic films and I stopped having crushes. I would lie when gossiping with other girls about how “sexy” all the members of One Direction were or how “hot” Justin Bieber was.** I never actually thought anyone was hot; I thought more of men as handsome or charming, because love to me was still a hand held or a longing embrace. **The idea that love was shifting into passion and sex scared me and made me feel like an outsider. This was not the type of love I thought I could ever feel, and I watched it grow to be the standards for legitimizing love as my high school friends started hooking up with guys and losing their virginities to their high school sweethearts.**

I hoped the phase of **not feeling** would pass, that I just needed to meet the right boy to make me feel all the things other girls were feeling—but I never did. I could only watch with fear and doubt of what NC-17 looked like as high school was rapidly coming to a close and college was around the corner.

In my last year of high school, I finally dated again. Not having found the right boy, I thought I should try to find the right girl. She was and she wasn't. She was every classic high school movie character wrapped into one: blonde, blue-eyed, piercings, angsty, drug addict, poet, suicidal, soon-to-be high school drop-out. We fell in love. I was swooped away by every emotion and I was intoxicated by the feeling of being in a romantic movie again but I was always terrified to kiss her. **When she talked about wanting to have sex or sending nudes, I watched myself quickly dissociate from every scene and every line**

**until we were no longer in the same movie. A mixture of internalized homophobia and lack of understanding of who I was created a bittersweet love story. She couldn't understand how I could love her but not *show* love to her and so our chapter quickly came to an end, making me further question the strange nature of my sexuality.**

## **Clueless**

In the summer before college, I decided I needed to reinvent myself. I still had a lot of things to understand: my sexuality, my faith, my passion, and how they could all coexist with one another. I had jumped into a relationship before I could truly understand my sexual orientation, and I had always let movies guide my understanding of what type of love was wrong or right. I took the time after my breakup to understand all the different types of loving. Movies hadn't represented who I was for a long time. **I saw no queer black women in love on tv and I had never seen asexual representation or even heard the term uttered in real life or online.**

I needed to learn what love looked like for me and so I searched the internet, went on meetups and dates. I started to come to terms with the idea of me being asexual and biromantic. Both seemed to describe how I had been feeling over the past 10 years but I couldn't be sure. I had only ever seen those terms on the internet and I was the only asexual and biromantic person I knew of. There was no real way for me to verify if that was who I truly was. **No show, no movie, no person could validate how I felt and what I had experienced so far.**

As my first year of college went by, I tried to get over my fear of kissing. I began to feel more comfortable kissing people but I knew I wasn't feeling the same type of pleasure most people find when kissing others. **I could tell my partners were confused and a little embarrassed by my lack of reciprocity but kissing wasn't appealing to me or sexually pleasing in any manner. It**

**was nice to do but I never felt an urge to passionately kiss any of my partners. I began to think I would never feel that urge.**

Meanwhile, I had begun an intense friendship with a girl I had met during college orientation. **I had finally entered a new movie, one where best friends fall in love without realizing it, with the added complication of the gay girl falling in love with her straight best friend and getting her heart crushed. Seemingly two contradicting plot points, no?** However, our love for each other quickly grew from simply caring for one another to L-O-V-E.

She told me her newfound feelings for me during winter break over a Facetime call and right when that call ended things began to lock into place. Suddenly, all of the PG-13 movies started to make sense. In the span of a week, my body had turned into a teenage boy's, filled with lust and longing but no clue on how to act on my feelings. The new feelings simultaneously terrified and excited me. **I thought I was finally becoming sexually typical; that I was becoming "normal".**

However, those feelings of normalcy went away as quickly as they came. The girl soon retracted her feelings for me, realizing she could never act on them because of a homophobic home environment and her own internalized homophobia. **Heartbroken but filled with new uncertain feelings, I anxiously looked to find a way to maintain my newfound openness to sexual intimacy.** I began to casually date but I didn't feel the urge to kiss people anymore, and I didn't feel the same yearning for them. I was angry and confused. Why was it that my romance movie always stopped right before the bedroom scene? Did I really only get one shot at love?

**Friends with Benefits (the Ace Edition)**

During my time of casual dating, I had become good friends with a girl who I would confide in about the cringiness of my love life. One day, she suddenly came to my room and asked if she could make out with me. A familiar dread came over me in that moment, scared to see where it would go, what it would mean and if I'd enjoy it. I began to explain to her how I had never done anything like that with someone and all my fears and insecurities tumbled out of my mouth as she stood in my doorway. She frankly responded that she did not care.

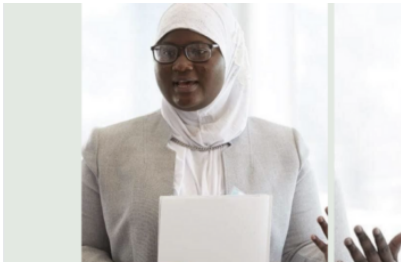
At that time, she was the only person in the world who understood my uncertainty in my sexuality and she was fine with whatever it was and was not. With that unconditional acceptance, we became friends with benefits. We were by no means a conventional case. I learned more about my own conceptions of sexual pleasure and how despite being less physical in nature than others, they are still valid. I learned in pleasing others, I could please myself.

**Many people assume asexual people don't have sex but many of us do. I may not be as inclined to want to have sex or feel as much sexual pleasure during it but I now always feel satisfied in my ways of loving, no matter their form. For a long time, I thought my love wasn't good enough, that it wasn't complete. I've learned over time that identifying as demisexual felt more accurate to the things I was feeling and that my sexual feelings for someone depends on a strong platonic connection first.** I now know that love is not simply what we see in the movies. It can be many things. It can be everything or seemingly nothing but all forms and levels of love are real and should be championed and represented as much as "traditional" or "typical" love is. **My movie is by no means complete and I may not have found my happy ending yet, but I am satisfied in knowing that my ending will be just as real as anyone else's.**



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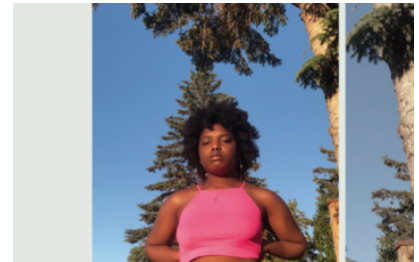
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### 3 thoughts on “PG to Rated A: An Asexual’s Journey Through Love & Life”



**Regine** April 22, 2020 at 7:37 pm

Raw and honest. Your story validates what so many out there feel. Everyone’s story unfolds in their own unique way. Everyone’s story is valid.

### Reply



nina May 8, 2020 at 1:39 pm

thank you. in a few beautiful words, you've summed up everything i've ever felt but had no words or movies or books to turn into to help validate my experience. i've never seen myself anywhere else this clearly. this story is an incredible gift. ❤️

### Reply



Ava June 1, 2020 at 4:02 am

Thank you so much for sharing. This was really awesome to read. I felt like I saw a lot of myself in your story and it made me feel less alone 😊😊😊

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