

Love is her

Johanna Rosey

LOVE
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Foreword

This book is very special to me. I'm incredibly proud of this being the first English novel I've ever written, and the first time I've let a character like Lena take up this much space in my head. Writing it felt exciting, scary and surprisingly personal.

The story is completely fictional, but it's still written from a place that's close to me. I'm a lesbian myself and while Lena is not me, I do recognize parts of my own thoughts, feelings and experiences in her. Still, this is her story, not mine, and almost everything that happens here comes from imagination rather than real life.

As I'm from the Netherlands, choosing to write in English was an exciting and scary choice. It pushed me out of my comfort zone and made me focus on what I really wanted to say. In a way, it made the story more passionate.

At its core, this novel is about falling in love, getting lost, pain and finding yourself, especially when it comes to loving another woman. I hope you'll feel understood while walking alongside Lena for a while.

Thanks for picking up this book and giving my first novel a chance. I hope you enjoy Lena's story as much as I enjoyed writing it.

Note: This is my first English book, so please be forgiving. There may be some grammatical or spelling mistakes. Also, this is a modern book and contains coarse language and sexually explicit content.

My name is Johanna Rosey. I was born on March 25th, 1997, and I grew up in a small village in the Netherlands. I was raised in a lively household with my two brothers, my mother and my father. Although every life has its ups and downs, I'm grateful to my parents for the loving heart they gave me.

I've always been passionate and sensitive, with a strong temperament. I'm a people person with a strong sense of justice and I have zero tolerance for discrimination. I believe everyone deserves respect, safety and the freedom to be who they are.

Writing has been my way of breathing for as long as I can remember. I write to clear my head, to process what I'm going through, and to put feelings into words when speaking isn't enough. Whether it's quotes, personal experiences, short stories or poems, writing helps me organize my thoughts and express myself. That's how LOVE IS HER came to life.

Being a lesbian is simply love, real, authentic and equal to any other kind of love. Love in all its forms deserves respect and it deserves protection.

This book is dedicated to everyone who is fighting a battle with their sexuality, whether it's internal, personal, or something you've had to defend.

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This book is dedicated to everyone who struggles with their sexuality. You are seen, you are loved, and there is nothing wrong with you. Love is beautiful in every form.



Prologue

Just as she was looking at a swirling autumn scene, the door opened and Alice Heart stepped inside.

Older, elegant and dressed in a dark green coat that matched confidence in her step. Her heels clicked softly on the wooden floor. Lena recognized her at once, Zoe's aunt, someone she had known only in the distant, respectful way a child knows a friend's family. Zoe had been her best friend in primary school, but they had lost contact years ago, so it had been a long time since Lena had last seen Alice. Zoe had often stayed with Alice because her own mother was often abroad for work and her father was not in the picture. Alice had dark blonde hair that caught the light softly and wore a subtle golden necklace with a tiny ring hanging from it. The ring had belonged to Zoe when she was little but no longer fit her, so Alice wore it around her neck with matching golden earrings.

Alice's eyes found hers with an intensity that made Lena feel seen in a way she never expected. The look stayed too long to be polite.

"Lena," she said, her voice warm and smooth. "You have grown into someone quite remarkable." Lena swallowed, unsure why she suddenly felt breathless.

Alice came closer, admiring the painting beside her, a swirling autumn scene with leaves dancing wildly on the canvas. Her hand brushed Lena's as she reached out, and Lena felt a shiver go up her arm.

"It is a beautiful piece," Lena said, trying to sound normal.

Alice tilted her head, looking at the painting then at her. "It is," she said, "but I find the person noticing it far more interesting."

Lena ignored her, unsure if Alice was flirting or being overly friendly.

As the evening went on, the gallery was filled with soft conversa-

tions and laughter. Alice stayed close by, pretending to look at the books, but her eyes kept drifting to Lena.

At one point she smiled and asked, "Do you remember Zoe?"

Lena nodded and memories came back clearly.

"She was your best friend in primary school," Alice said. "She often stayed with me because her mother was abroad for work."

Lena smiled softly and the past felt close for a moment.

"Yes, it has been a long time since I saw Zoe," Lena said quietly.

Slowly the guests began to leave but Alice stayed. When only a few people were left, Lena started picking up wine glasses and said she would help her boss clean up.

Alice came closer, standing close enough for Lena to smell sandalwood and something sweet under it.

"You do not have to clean alone," she said softly. "Let me help."

Before Lena could answer, Alice's hand covered hers over a glass. The touch was light, but every part of Lena felt it.

"You have been restless," Alice said quietly.

Lena's heart jumped. "I'm just like that."

"I know," Alice whispered. "I notice things others miss."

Lena had no answer, at least not one that made sense.

Then Alice asked the question that changed everything. "Let me take you somewhere we can be alone."


Lena hesitated, not because she wanted to say no, but because she was terrified. She nodded.

Lena said goodbye to her boss and stepped out of the gallery. She wasn't sure where she was going as she stepped into the car with Alice. It was a quiet drive. Lena stared out the window, feeling nervous and trying not to think about what might happen next. Alice parked carefully, turned off the engine and looked at Lena with steady eyes.

"I can take you home if you want," she said. "But I would hate to see you go."

"I'm not going home," Lena said, her voice barely there.

"Okay, babe. Let us go in then....".

A black and white artistic photograph of a person's back and shoulders, with the title 'Brown-eyed Girl' overlaid in a white serif font. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the contours of the skin against a dark background.

Brown-eyed Girl

Lena was an only child. Her parents loved her deeply, perhaps even a little too much. Their care wrapped around her like a protective shield, born from a quiet fear of losing her or facing the uncertain future.

She had never had a brother or sister to share her secrets or dreams with, and her parents themselves were only children too.

Most of her grandparents had passed away, leaving only her grandfather on her father's side, an old man who barely recognized her anymore.

At home, Lena loved her parents and found comfort in their presence. They made her feel less alone but at the same time, she sensed how they kept her small, sheltering her in a way that made her restless and eager for something more.

Despite having friends, Lena was never the most popular girl, nor did she want to be. People were drawn to her calm, gentle energy, the kind that made others feel safe and understood. Even on days when she felt tired or down, she wore a smile. She was the friend who listened when others needed to talk, the one who could be trusted with their pain and worries.

But inside her, there was a part of life she hadn't touched yet, a part she longed to explore.

She wanted to taste the wild freedom of nights out, to feel the rush of a kiss, to get wasted drunk, to meet new people without the weight of fear holding her back. It was as if a storm was building inside her, waiting for the moment to break free.

Lena was a brown-eyed girl with dark brown hair and full lips. Recently, she had taken a small but bold step by getting her nose pierced. Her parents had accompanied her to the studio, nearly in tears, because their little girl wasn't so little anymore. She was beginning to find her own style, her own voice. Always neat and clean, Lena's delicate build hid a steady strength she carried quietly within. Her clothes were simple but shifting and she had started to dislike the dresses her mom bought her. Now, she preferred oversized hoodies, jeans and worn-out sneakers, clothing that felt like an armor for the new life she

was ready to live.

She worked in a bookstore, a place that brought her peace and happiness.

School had been difficult, the confusion of puberty and the struggle to understand who she truly was had made her miserable. So, she had quit. Her parents thought it was a shame, as Lena was very smart, but she found a different kind of freedom among the quiet shelves of books, a place where she could escape and breathe.

Lena wanted change, real change. She wanted to start fresh. Together with her parents, she searched for a place to live in the city. They found a small apartment on the edge of town. It wasn't much but it was hers. Cozy and quiet, it felt like a new beginning, a place where she could slowly build the life she dreamed of, piece by piece.

As Lena moved into the apartment, she decided to adopt a cat she named Miley. From the very first moment, Miley became a comforting presence in her new home. The soft weight of the cat curling up beside her on cold evenings made Lena feel less scared, less alone. Miley's gentle purring filled the room and seemed to soothe the restless thoughts in Lena's mind. Having this small, living connection gave her a sense of calm she hadn't realized she needed.

Settling into the apartment, Lena found herself with more space, not just physically but mentally and emotionally too. The silence of the empty space allowed her thoughts to surface more clearly. For the first time in a long while, she had the room to think deeply, to really feel everything that was stirring inside her.

Lena started to notice something new happening within herself, changes that she couldn't fully understand or explain yet. She watched her friends as they moved into new stages of their lives. Many had already kissed, gone on dates or even experienced sex. These were experiences Lena felt she was always late to, as if she was standing on the edge of a river, watching everyone else cross to the other side while she hesitated.

Boys had shown interest in her over time, but the feelings never

matched. There was no spark, no flutter in her chest. Sometimes, this left Lena confused and worried. She wondered if something was wrong with her, something missing. But alongside the doubt, there was a curiosity beginning to grow.

One quiet night, Lena was curled up on the couch, half watching Netflix while her mind drifted between thoughts and distractions. Then, a scene caught her completely off guard, a tender moment between two women, their lips meeting in a gentle, lingering kiss. At first, Lena blinked in surprise, unsure why the image stirred something deep inside her.

Without really thinking, she found herself drawn closer to the screen, her eyes locked on the scene before her. The world around her seemed to fade and all she could feel was a fluttering in her stomach, like a swarm of tiny butterflies taking flight. It was a strange, unfamiliar sensation but not unpleasant at all.

Her hands moved on their own, sliding slowly down her body. The excitement building inside, she touched herself with a curiosity she had never allowed before a secret exploration that felt both thrilling and terrifying. Her breath quickened, every nerve alive, as if discovering a hidden part of herself for the very first time. Out of the blue, Miley started putting on a little meowing show, which brought her back to reality. The only feeling that stayed was confusion.

The next morning Lena decided it was time to go out, out of her comfort zone. She sent a quick message to her two closest friends, Jolie and Kate.

“Hey, want to come over tonight? I thought maybe we could have a little drink here before heading out.”

Almost immediately, her phone buzzed with enthusiastic replies.

She was both thrilled and nervous. Tonight, she might get drunk for the first time. She hopped into the shower, got dressed quickly because she was already running late, gave Miley the biggest, happiest kiss ever and rushed out the door toward work.

Lena spent the day at the bookstore, helping customers and sorting

books on the shelves. She carefully put new books in place and made sure everything looked neat. The quiet of the shop and the smell of paper surrounded her as she worked, and time flew by.

Tired from work but excited for the night, Lena came home. Her friends were coming in about an hour, so she decided to pick out some of her best clothes and tidy up a little. She lit a few candles, put some chips on the table and turned on some pop music. Her friends were bringing the wine.

The doorbell rang, scaring the shit out of Miley, who bolted into the bedroom and hid under the bed. Lena's friends, Jolie and Kate, stepped into the room. They were dressed in short skirts and high heels. Lena knew she was very different from her friends, but she was unbothered because of it. She loved those girls, knowing that despite their many differences, they shared a strong bond.

"Miiiilleey!" Kate yelled. "Where are you, my little smoopsie-poopsie?"

Miley shot out from under the bed and ran straight to Kate. Those two shared a weird, tight connection.

"Don't tell your mommy, but I brought you something," Kate said, pulling a toy with catnip out of her purse.

Miley gave it a sniff then walked away arrogantly, her tail swaying.

Jolie interrupted them with a sudden outburst, which scared Miley again and sent her straight back under the bed. "Attention! It's time to get Lena drunk for the first time!" she shouted.

Lena poured three glasses of wine, her hands slightly shaky but steady. They toasted quietly and for the first time Lena felt a thrill as she tasted the alcohol. The warmth spreading through her chest was both strange and comforting.

After a few glasses of wine and lots of laughter, Jolie nudged Lena, "You ready to hit the party?!"

Lena nodded, her heart pounding with nervous excitement.

The night outside was cold and busy when they arrived. Through the windows, Lena could see it was crowded inside, yet there was

still enough space to stand. Music thumped from every corner, people danced and talked, the air thick with energy and the smell of cigarettes. It all felt so unfamiliar to Lena, and she already felt the alcohol starting to take effect in her system. Overwhelmed, she held tightly on to her friends.

That was the moment when Lucas appeared. A friend of Jolie's, who was the more outgoing and flirtier one of the group. Jolie was always the light of the party, while Kate was quieter and more reserved, the type to observe before joining in. Lucas approached Lena with a confident smile and easy charm. He smiled and complimented her nose piercing. Feeling braver from the alcohol, Lena smiled back and joined the conversation easily, unaware of his flirtatious tone.

Lucas invited the three girls inside. They followed him through the crowded nightclub, laughter and music filling the air.

Lena looked around, feeling the energy of the night settle over her. She decided to switch things up and reach for a cold beer instead of wine, not sure if she liked the sour taste of the wine.

After she mentioned her choice, Lucas excused himself and headed to the bar to grab drinks for everyone. As he returned with drinks in hand, Lena felt a wave of confidence growing inside her, helping her stand a little taller in the crowd.

At first, Lena had been terrified, overwhelmed by the noise and the crowd but as the night went on, she found herself relaxing and enjoying the chaos. Kate, usually the quieter one, was laughing a lot more and having fun. Jolie was already deep into the party mood, her playful and flirty energy spreading to everyone around her.

Suddenly, Kate's eyes locked onto a stranger across the room. Without hesitation, she stumbled over to him and before anyone could stop her, they were sharing an awkward, yet hilarious kiss right in the middle of the dance floor. Lena watched, a mix of amusement and embarrassment curling in her chest as Kate barely managed to stay upright.

Feeling a bit braver from the alcohol, Lena decided to try her hand at dancing. Her movements were uncertain and uncoordinated, and it

was kind of painful that she was making a bit of a fool of herself. Still, she kept going, lost in the moment.

That's when Lucas, now drunk himself, made his move. He leaned in, attempting to kiss Lena but panic washed over her and she quickly pulled away. Just as things felt awkward, Kate and Jolie swooped in like a rescue team, laughing uncontrollably at the situation. Without wasting another second, the three of them grabbed each other's arms and hurried out of the nightclub, leaving Lucas behind, drunk and defeated.

Giggling and stumbling over each other, the three friends decided it was time for pizza. Their steps were unsteady but carefree as they made their way to a nearby pizza joint, craving the warm, cheesy slices that would be the perfect end to their wild night.

They pushed open the door of the small, brightly lit pizza place, the scent of melting cheese and baked dough wrapping around them like a comforting hug. Still giggling, they approached the counter and were barely able to contain their excitement, ordered two large pizzas to share, one topped with various meats and the other vegan, catering to Lena's diet.

After placing their order, they found a sticky table by the window and settled in, waiting for their pizzas to arrive. Lena's eyes wandered outside and caught sight of a familiar figure standing across the street.

"Hey, I know her," she said softly.

Kate glanced over and laughed. "Yeah, that's Ava. She's a leees-biaaaan," she teased, causing all three to burst into laughter. But despite the jokes, Lena's drunken mind started swirling with questions.

"Do you have her Instagram?" she asked suddenly.

Kate pulled out her phone and showed Lena Ava's profile. Lena grabbed her own phone and quickly searched for Ava.

"I'm going to message her," Lena said.

Kate and Jolie exchanged confused glances, clearly puzzled by Lena's sudden decision to reach out. They couldn't understand why she wanted to message someone she barely knew and their expressions

showed their uncertainty.

Their moment was interrupted as the pizzas arrived, hot and steaming, landing on the sticky table in front of them.

Without thinking much, Lena sent Ava a follow request along with a simple “Hi” message. She wasn’t even sure why and when she looked outside again, Ava had already walked away.

They dug into the pizzas with messy hands and hearty laughs, the cheese stretching as they pulled slices apart. The night ended with them feeling deliciously drunk and satisfied, ready to start their slow, tipsy journey home.

