

Out of the Closet

Jessi: *Hi! I have one big secret, but no one knows. I'm a normal sixteen-year-old. I enjoy hanging out with friends, going to parties, and I go to a public high school in a small American town. The only difference between you and me is that I'm gay.*

Gabby: *Hi! I'm friends with Jessi, and he doesn't know that I'm experiencing the same struggles. I'm gay too. My best friends told me that I disgusted them; therefore, I was no longer allowed to socialize with them, because I am gay.*

Jessi: *Before I get into anything else, I want you to know a few things about me. Number one, I come from a split family; I live with my mom all the time. Unfortunately, my dad got custody of my sister in the divorce. I don't see my dad or my sister often because he and my mom don't get along very well. As for my personality, I'm outgoing and rambunctious, but in certain situations I'm quiet and introverted.*

Gabby: *Here are a few things you should know about me. I'm super introverted and suffer from anxiety, depression, and PTSD. Even though I feel safe around Jessi and could tell him anything, I still have the incessant feeling that I am a freak.*

Jessi: *I want to let you know that our town is not very accepting of gay marriage or dating. For example, when I told my parents that I was gay, my dad's mouth fell open and a huge smile came across my mom's face. Nothing could have prepared me for what happened next. The ear piercing screaming... "You made him this way!" and "He's only starting to rebel because you were never there for him!" Yes, my dad was never there for me, but I'm not coming out for spite. My mother has always been my mom and my best friend all in one. Yet, she was also not*

always there for me. She was in and out of the hospital for most of my young life. Now that I'm older, I'm her caretaker.

Gabby: My family differs from Jessi's. I live with my granddad, mom, dad, brother, and sister. I came out to my sister before anyone in my family. Then my brother, he told my mom that same night. Fortunately, my parents supported me.

Jessi: One Morning I received a text from Gabby's brother. The text confirmed my suspicions...she was gay too. I was overwhelmed with emotion and the knowledge that I was not alone.

Jessi: As Gabby and I are walking to the lunch room, I wanted to discuss our social secret. Just as I was about to approach the topic, Gabby's friend, Hanna, called Gabby over. Finding another opportunity will be difficult. --Two more class periods...before I can talk to her again. After class we are walking home. On the way to her house, I gulp down the pit in my throat and say, "What's your sexuality?" She looked at me with fire in her eyes. Then all of a sudden she answered.

Gabby: I am so angry with Jessi! All this time... he is just now asking me? I controlled my miff. I told him that I was gay and he collapsed onto the pavement. "Jesus Christ!" was all I could muster up. I felt so frustrated. I'm really thinking about just leaving him on the sidewalk.

Jessi: I woke up as Gabby slapped me! "Ow, what was that for?" Is she really mad at me? First I thought she was joking. Then I saw her crying. Was she upset that I asked the question? Thinking that I would make her less angry I said, "I'm gay too." For the next few hours, we didn't say a word to each other, she wouldn't even make eye contact with me. When I went down stairs for a drink, her parents stopped me and asked, "What's wrong?" I replied, "I

brought up something that I should not have.” They said “You brought up the fact that she was gay, right?” I looked at them confused. “We talked about it yesterday.” Then they said, “And you’re gay too.” Gabby and her parents had a quick chat. She came back upstairs crying and gave me the biggest hug. We laid in her bed together and just talked until midnight.

Gabby: I was in tears when I came back upstairs from talking to my parents. I realized how mean I have been to him. We discussed things that made us laugh, how long we have been gay, how long we have been friends, and...how long we hid this from each other. Then he asked me “why have you kept this from me for this long?” I told him that I didn’t because I was afraid that he would tell someone or not like me. Then I asked him the same questions, he said, “My friends and family did not approve.”

Jessi: Our friendship has been so much better since we opened up about our sexuality. We are less nervous about other problems. We have both found someone who loves us. My parents have come to terms with my sexuality and my boyfriend.

Gabby: My parents have accepted my new girlfriend, and she comes over all the time.

Gabby and Jessi: That’s our story. You make your own decisions. We want you to know that it’s better to talk about things that bother you than to hold them in. Find someone you trust and share your story. There is someone out there for you.