

MEMORIES FROM MY CLOSET
LISA | BOOK 1
DANIELLE ARAGÃO

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First of all, I would like to thank my mother, Mércia. The universe was wonderful with me, giving me the best mom of lesbian in the world.

I wish I could thank my father and the doubts that his absence left me. The doubt of not knowing whether or not I would be accepted by him, certainly guided many of my ways to be a better person. I know he wouldn't reprove me for being happy.

To my wife Kelly, who held my hand, guiding me to the necessary changes to make this book possible. Love you!

To my friends (there are many), nephews (Joao Paulo and Thiago) and my sister Rose, for so many years of friendship, companionship and understanding.

Danielle Aragão

Preface

This is a book about love. Love stories. No definitions, adjectives or connotations. Love in its simplest and purest existence. How we should be or feel. In a state almost metaphysical, in which it can only be perceived by those who has already experienced it in its deeper spectrum.

Love as an intransitive verb. One can and must love. Period. The complement is secondary. Loving is our first feeling while human being. Comes from our most early childhood, with our blood streams and unimaginable constructions; like nature, the sunset, the moon....

These are feelings that give you goose bumps for no reason, wishing without realizing, dreaming with wide open eyes, asking for more. A lot more. From the most remote times to the most recent ones, there are beautiful stories in which love is the main character of plots to make one whole. Loving is not antagonism of suffer. It is raw. Golden. Pure.

Difficult to describe or control. Impossible to understand, just to be hooked within. Loving is good. Very good. In "Memories from my closet" series, Danielle Aragao's first adventure into literature, she brings five stories of women who love. Women who love other women.

Stories of suffering, achievements, desires, cries, laughter, betrayals, discoveries and overruns. Easier ones. Others more difficult. Stories that look like they could be my life, yours, hers, or anyone else who loves. Because loving is intrinsic to the human being and choosing who you love should be just a mere detail.

Along five years, she has heard many confessions, testimonies and outbursts. Some well striking. Others not so outstanding. Altogether, has created a repertoire until she reached the ideal narrative that served as inspiration to write five beautiful fragments of women's stories that made them come out - "or being pulled" – from their closets, with the sole and exclusive goal of being happy.

In that period - between Brazil and the United States, throughout a painful separation and a new chance to start again that culminated in a beautiful wedding – she purged all that repressed feelings in a kind of erupting volcano, transposing in the form of texts that "any form of love is worth".

Each woman has her very own personality and history. Each woman has her speech. Danielle had the care and respect to portray the discovery of their sexuality, with all its highs and lows, always gifting them with a happy ending, in a kind of protection, help for those who needed a push or just a friendly shoulder.

For the next pages, I'll give you an advice: allow yourself. Allow yourself to experience each of these stories as your own. Regardless of gender. With all the fears, frustrations, uncertainties, as well as all surprises and good feelings. Allow yourself only and foremost: to love.

Mirella Martins



Lisa

I don't know if it is right to relate children's behavior to the development of their sexuality. The fact that I am hallucinated by girls, has nothing to do with the fact that I was a torn kid in my childhood, or has it? I think it is unlikely, since, for this reason, I was always with boys and not interested in female games, or the girls themselves. It's not that I wanted to be a boy, don't get me like that, I just didn't want to think and act like girls; it was nothing physical, it was behavioral. Today, I can even think that it was a thirst for freedom, which was not part of the girls' behavior, such as walking barefoot, swearing and having rebellious attitudes. I did not accept living in a box, nor did I obey certain rules which made no sense to me. Even today, knowing that no rule makes any sense to such a rebellious girl. I was driving my mother crazy, despite the fact that she is a feminist, liberal and with a forward-looking mind. Oh! She is from the sign of Aquarius, that must be something.

Dolls didn't interest me, unless the game was a war between two rival worlds with alien invasion. Since I was three years old, I didn't know what it was like to have a knee without wounds and toes not missing a piece. It was an intense and adventurous childhood, but at the same time very innocent. Even as at the beginning of my teen ages, I never noticed boys by their beauty, charisma or attributes. They were just like me. As for the girls, I found them extremely boring, they did not take any chances in the games, or fight when they were victims of teasing. For whatever little thing, they ran home crying and I couldn't stand it. My mom didn't care that I just wanted to play with the boys from my neighborhood, except when they started to thicken their voices and grow hair on their legs. At that time, my brother John tried to prevent me from playing in the streets with the boys, although he was three years younger than me.

It took me longer than usual to develop sexuality. At fifteen, I was still playing ball on the streets, getting more and more in touch with the younger boys on my neighborhood. I think that I was reluctant to become a teenager. Maybe it was a natural block when facing what only my unconscious knew, and that, however, started to worry my mother, because she thought that I was not developing naturally. She thought I could have some kind of delay. I did not fit in within people of my age.

This age thing is pure nonsense, because it was only at the age of fifteen that I had my first kiss to a twelve-year-old boy. I remember it as if it were today, his name was Breno. We were assembling Lego (A toy, ideal for children to let their imagination run free) in his garage and laughing at something, when he stopped with his face right in front of mine and asked if he could kiss me. I laughed wildly and asked if he was serious, and he was.

- Really, sis. I think you're the cutest.
- It is not possible that you are serious, man. You are my "partner in crime".
- If you don't like it, we forget that it ever happened, and we will remain friends.

That kiss, which was piece of shit, was the decisive kick for me to leave childhood and enter puberty, facing the uncertainties of the discovery of sexuality. Of course, my friendship with Breno went to hell.

At that time, the girls still bothered me, because I couldn't stand their presence for long. As for the boys' company, I felt at home, and I felt more and more comfortable around them. I kissed an endless number of guys, but when it got a little hotter, I ran. No touching "on that" and no intercourse on their back seats. I didn't have my first serious boyfriend until I was seventeen. I think it turned into a personal challenge, to convince myself that there was nothing different about me. Around six months of dating, I got carried away by Rodrigo's incessant attempts. A little rub there, climbing to boobies' kiss, and I finally grabbed his dick. I thought it was so weird, and the face he had while I was squeezing that thing; he said: "go Lisa, back and forth", "squeeze tightly", "put it in your mouth, will you?". And I did put it in my mouth, squeezed it hard, but he was not satisfied.

- Take off your clothes, will you? Let me put in a little bit of my dick, just a little.
- I don't think so, not yet.
- Damn Lisa. I'm dying of lust. It is not possible that you do not want to.
- I want to, but I don't know if it's the right time - I said this to buy some time.

I did not get any extra time to think. Rodrigo, in one movement, took off my shorts and ran his fingers inside my panties, tearing it off without me opposing it. He ran two fingers through the middle of my legs, and I felt a chill. I hadn't even noticed, but he gave a laugh of satisfaction when he heard my involuntary groan. I was overcome with excitement, heat ... finally I was turned on. I felt his hot tongue licking my thighs and getting closer and closer to my clitoris. Him, playing a game of back and forward, and I almost shouted: "Fuck it!" He finally played with the tip of his tongue and increased the pace in circular movements. I had never felt anything so intense. I started to feel my body stiffen, a wave of pleasure running through it. I was almost enjoying myself, and I no longer could control my movements. That was when I felt that thick thing entering, breaking and invading my body. My lust, at once, went away at that particular moment.

While all the girls in high school excitedly told their adventures in bed, I wasn't sure if they lied or if I didn't know how to do it. Of course, I told amazing stories, which didn't even happen in my imagination.

I started to perceive girls as a challenging, as if I were a badly finished project of a woman; as if something was missing in me to make me equal to them. I couldn't look directly at the naked girls in the gym's locker room, but I looked discreetly to compare their bodies to mine. I thought their bodies were beautiful and, in these comparisons, I

never found anything in them that I didn't have the same. Some with less boobies, others with more ass, but nothing that would bother the way I perceived my anatomy.

I couldn't understand why I was so upset when having more intimate moments with my friends. I never liked being touched or walking hand in hand in the public, as the girls used to.

Nowadays, looking back, I realize that, perhaps, I lived in the wrong environment. I didn't really like the behavior of upper middle-class girls. I didn't even know why I was studying at that school. I was so surrounded by girls with no content. In fact, it wasn't the girl in general that I didn't find interesting, were the girls at my school, full of futility and male chauvinism. I was not raised like that. I always liked to read, go to the theater, question the matters of life, the air, and the sea. If I've made a list of dreams at that time, surely, getting married and having children would be the last items. But those girls had dream lists of marrying boys whose names and surnames were traditional.

I was accepted for languages and literature at my desired college. In the first days of classes, I realized that I had landed on a new planet. The people in my classroom were very different from my private high school classmates from the south. A mix of open minds and bodies. I chose the course at 45 minutes of the second half to register for the entrance exam. I had thought about taking the exam for computer engineering or agronomy, but none of these courses captivated me. To be honest, not even the course of choice; I wasn't sure why I chose to do it. The classes for this course were in the arts and communication building, and the level of thinking there was different, everything was available for a try; from drugs to sex of all modalities. I also tried everything a little, without burning bridges, to be able to go back to any traditional way of behavior that gave me comfort and peace.

I, who always thought of myself as a crazy bitch, looked around and found myself the most common girl in the room. It was a small and very diverse class. What we really had in common was the feeling that we didn't know how we got there, in first place. I chose a chair that I would not be at the front rows or at the very hear end. On my right side, sat a girl named Priscilla; on the other side, a boy with such strange hair that, without seeing his face, I didn't know if he was a boy or if he was even part of the human species. Pricilla was wearing one of those skirts bought at the farms market and a tank top. Belly out and heart open to everyone. I can't say if we became friends out of sympathy or lack of options, as we had absolutely nothing in common. However, I confess, it was looking at her that I realized that I was a "snob".

It was the first day of classes, and Priscilla seemed to know everyone. I really think she pretended to know people to walk around talking like crazy, to the point that others accepted it as an introduction (I think they were just polite). She had a very smooth way of looking at life, which made me approach her. We became best friends for everything. With her, I smoked marijuana for the first time, had my first hangover and learned to "fuck with no commitment". Together we dated half of the guys of the campus.

Priscilla was my first female friend. I gradually learned that women share secrets, fears, and desires, or almost all desires. We're always together, until the day she decided to kiss me. I returned the kiss and did not treat it as a big deal because I was kissed by a woman. This went very lightly in my head: "Damn, it's a woman I am kissing!"; "Fuck, it's Priscilla!", But the truth is, I didn't like it. I thought it was boring and very delicate.

When the long kiss ended, I realized that she had a silly face. I swear I wanted to laugh; this situation was very funny to me; although it suddenly became embarrassing, uncomfortable. It wasn't for me, it was for her, it was like the time suddenly stopped when I noticed that she was looking into my eyes, waiting for some kind of answer and I didn't even know what was being questioned. The worst was not the kiss, because a kiss is a kiss and it is always valid, the problem was to find out that my best friend was in love with me. How is that possible? These things of experimenting new things have nothing to do with feeling, or they shouldn't have.

I came to the conclusion that experimenting means trying different things to find out what we like, and so, she discovered that she liked me, and I therefore discovered that she had just lost her best friend. Do you see? That's why I prefer to hang out with the boys, because women are very complicated species.

My discomfort around women has decreased after that kiss. My circle of friends started to consist more of girls. I tried two or three times more, with no much impact, with unknown girls, and always interspersed with a big number of boys. I was more open to sex, although I didn't feel ready to have sex with girls. I was not in the mood to fall in love, because if boys were easier to let go of, women in the other hand, stick around like gum on shoe soles. You just need to sleep over once, with one of them, to receive proposals to live together in the same apartment.

I was tough with the girls that I had any kind of relation, as well as with all those that tried to relate to me. I had lots of fun while messing with their feelings. Until the day I became interested in a girl, and when I say that, it was because I wanted her, and not her hitting on me. She was the type of person who talks to us, but we are not sure if she notices your existence. She only attended one of my classes, so, I only saw her on Wednesdays, which was the only day of the week that I could breathe calmly, looking for all possible excuses in the world to be close to her. A final approach only ends up happening by the middle of the semester.

- Laura, do you already have a partner to do the assignment? - I asked, expecting to get dumped.

- Lisa, is your name. Isn't it? - I said yes with the head. She went on. - I do not have. Is this an invitation or just curiosity?

- An invitation. - I blushed instantly.

- What a surprise! You are so engaged with the rest of the class, I thought I would catch whoever was left.

- Not at all! You can get to know my friends, too. I can guarantee you that no one bites.

- Neither you? What a shame! - she said, letting out a laugh when she saw that I was no longer red, but purple.

- Funny, very funny.

At first, we developed a great friendship. In fact, she attended her classes at night and attended this discipline in the morning to advance the course. Regardless of our academic time together, our friendship went beyond campus. I quickly realized that I was in love with her. I was hooked by someone for the first time. This was very strange, I had already dated half of the town to realize I had feeling for someone, to whom I did not share any kind of intimacy.

I created certain resistance to admit and much more to confess that I was in love. I needed to win the heart of this woman with no risk of exposing my feelings. I didn't want to let myself fall in love and, later, she let me go. That was my impression of what could happen, since I, too, had done the same with all the girls who approached me.

We used to do everything together and even go to each other's gynecologist consultations. Anyone who looked from outside perceived our relationship clearly, as if we were girlfriends, even though we were not.

At one of the crazy parties that took place in the campus, we got extremely drunk, I mean, she got extremely drunk. I was on the very happy stage, but still conscious to the point I could try something smart. It wasn't smart, it was pure lust. I leaned her against the wall and tried to kiss her.

- Are you sure you want to do this? We are friends.

- Shut the fuck up! Don't screw it, because I won't have the courage to try it again.

Don't you want?

- I really want to. - She paused to sob. - I'm sorry, you know I think you're very hot.

- Do you think?

- I do. Too bad you don't bite!

- I didn't bite, but now I will do whatever you want.

For the first time, I was entering a motel with a woman. The night became so special for me, that I asked for the best suite, with no time to leave. I even asked myself: "If I fuck this woman, drunk like this, wouldn't it be abuse?" I went to the fridge to get her some water, but I didn't even have a chance. Laura pulled me by the arm and gave me a breathtaking kiss.

- Wait, wait! - I said, trying to assimilate a little judgment. - Take water, to improve a little.

- Improve what? Stop Lisa, I'm not "drunk-crazy".

- I don't want to appear abusive. - she laughed so loudly that she had certainly made people in the rooms next door to listen.

- I may abuse you, if you don't stop being so silly.

She pulled me slightly closer, although I was horny with my skin in flames, I wanted everything to be slow and delicate. I wanted to have time to record in my mind every minute of that night, to have our acts, as a memory, all my life. The smell that emanated from our bodies was something I had never experienced before.

I can't say if it was the smell of love, sex, or pure desire. It was a different smell that, if bottled and distributed, would be the end of wars and all the wounds in the world. We had sex nonstop all night long. In a short pause, she fell asleep. I stayed there, not taking my eyes off her, recording every nuance of her expression. I was happy!

That was the best night of my life. It had hours of pure pleasure and delight. We left the motel, with the sun high in the sky. While I was thinking with the certainty that I wanted to live with this woman all my life, she was just worried because she had not told her mother that she would not sleep at home. I was completely involved by her scent, the softness of her skin, the warmth of her breath, everything. I went home, counting the minutes to see her, again.

- Hello. - she answered, still in a sleepy voice.
- Hi beautiful. - I replied soft as I never did before.
- Hey, what's up? We played hard last night, huh?
- Wow, don't even mention it, but I'm happy. Would you like to have lunch with me?
- Oh! It won't work, I have a barbecue at a friend's house. I'll call you another time.

That was enough to observe her indifference on the phone. I knew that the night before had not been as special for her as it was for me. I tried to convince myself that the lack of interest from her was just my imagination and insecurity. Maybe she already had made plans for that afternoon and for some unknown reason, she couldn't take me along. It wasn't like that. It took me three more hours in a row, until I realized that what happened between us, had died right there, in that motel room. She didn't go to class the following Wednesday, so we didn't see each other for two more weeks.

- What's up Lisa. How are you doing?
- All good, thanks. Are you hiding from me?
- Why would I hide?
- I don't know. You didn't want to hang out with me anymore. I'm sorry if I bothered you.
- Stop right there! I have no patience for drama. I was already aware of the problem of us making out. I asked you if you were sure you wanted to do that, because we were friends.
- Sorry, it was so good, I thought that...
- I knew this was going to suck! Look, don't get me wrong, it was great, really good. But I was seeing a girl already, and we're dating. I didn't mean to hurt you, but I have to get to you straight.
- Okay. I'm sorry if I confused everything. I hope it doesn't get in the way of our friendship.

Of course, our friendship did not continue as the same. Even continuing to talk to each other and going out in group, nothing else was as before. Much less the possibility of an affair between us. I dragged a chain because of her for a long time, pretended to feel a minimum of comfort around her and even asked how her relationship was going. One random day, I realized that I was the one who put the cart before the horse. Therefore, I needed to move on with my life. No one was obliged to be playing at the same tune as us. I cannot deny that it traumatized me to the point where I could no longer relate to anyone. It was a succession of casual encounters that I even lost count of.

The fault is never in the other's temperament, but in the expectations created by ourselves. People will not behave in a certain way, just because you expect too much from them, and the problem is entirely yours. That, I started making very clear to anyone who exceeded their intentions with me. My biggest problem was having crossed paths with people who had high expectations about me. Now, I say right out, as soon as I meet someone new, using Shane's phrase from the series "The L Word": "I don't do relationships".

Today, at the age of 34, I wonder if it would be time to stop, put my feet in a safe haven, have someone waiting for me at home, make grocery lists, save money to buy a house. I don't know, sometimes it seems that by being alone, we don't plan, we don't dream hard enough, we go on, living with no direction. I never wanted to think about it, so I could not come to the conclusion that being lonely is a bad thing. I have always tried to convince myself that individuality is the most precious asset that a human being carries. Is it?

In fact, everything has two or more sides. It's not just what you expect from life or love, it's just the phases of life. Finding the person who knots your head so hard that you forget all plans and beliefs.

I thought I would never fall in love again, but I was wrong. I fell in love again, in the same intensity as the first time. She was so incredible, so beautiful, so different from all the women who passed through my life. Do you know what is so special about this woman? That woman is her, the same woman that I fell in love with on a regular campus day. The same woman whom I spent a single incredible night; herself, Laura, my Laura! So many years went by without seeing her at least from afar. I didn't know where she was, and why I never saw her again. I just imagined that she must be a more mature and beautiful woman.

We met by chance in a bookstore. Where else would you find the love of your life? She was next to the non-fiction shelf, choosing books. That silhouette was unmistakable. I swallowed hard, gathered all the courage I didn't know I had, and went to talk to her.

- Laura? I do not believe it! Where have you been, that I never saw you again?
- Lisa?! My God! I was thinking about you right this instant. Can you believe it?
- Swear it? Thinking about...? - My smile was so wide that it undoubtedly drew the attention of the people passing by.
- I don't know. I was here, choosing some books, and I remembered of you. I missed the time I didn't see you.
- Where have you been for all these years?
- I was living in Portugal, getting a master's degree and some other specializations. Did you graduate?
- I did, but I got a little disenchanted with my professional career. I got tired of translating poor texts and revising other people's work.
- Have you written anything lately?
- Some poetry, little and silly things.
- Every writer and poet say that. Can I see it? I am a literary critic for a major publisher.
- God forbid, no. I won't show you anything. But I invite you for a cup of coffee. Do you accept?
- Sure, can it be here at the mall?
- Yes, it sure can.

At that encounter, I discovered that she was single, back in town and with an empty heart. When we were talking, nothing clicked, I did not hear bells or had butterflies in my stomach. Only when I got home, I realize that she, once again, had an impact over me. I didn't believe the new chance that life was giving me. I felt happy as I did on that blessed single night of love. I would never be stupid to the point of not getting her phone number. After all, would I call or not?

I thought for a few days if I should call her. I was trying not to create expectations or plans or even think about it; however, I couldn't really do it for a single minute. Before deciding whether to call or not, I asked the Tarot app on my cell phone, wrote on several pieces of paper with the words "yes" and "no", put it in a bag to take one for true. Even went to the window and said to myself "If the next person walking by on the street is a woman, I should call; if it is a man, I shouldn't". All the answers were: "just call, you silly!" When I finally picked up my cellphone to call, a movie played in my head, causing me a terrible fear of breaking my heart once again. Fear of creating expectations and getting frustrated. The remedy for that, perhaps, was not to care. I put the phone down on the table and went around the room with my hand on my chest, to see if I could keep the heart beat steady. Suddenly, the phone rang: it was her!

- Hey Beautiful, all good?
- Better now. - I sucked in the air with all my strength so that I wouldn't choke.
- Look, I don't want to give chances to bad luck. I wanted to ask you out.
- Why wouldn't I accept it?
- I don't know. I missed a good chance in the past, and when I wanted to go back, you were always busy.

- Be serious. I spent a lot of time in fear of approaching you.
- Let's not waste any more time. Do you still live in the same place?
- No. I'll give you the address: 37 Jordan Street.
- Are you kidding me? I live two blocks down. Come over here, I'll order something from a great Japanese restaurant. - She said so, and I didn't seem to believe it.

I searched the closet to find the best clothes for this occasion, including my best lingerie. At that moment, I found myself asking if I was, once again, overdoing what I could expect from this night. I soon replaced the thought with the most certain one: "what the hell...". I put on a soft perfume and a lipstick. I was ready for whatever possible to happen.

When I entered Laura's house, which was meticulously tidy, I remembered the mess that was in my head and how I would have to hold my impulsive thoughts and actions. The finely arranged table had candles and a bottle of wine with two glasses. At least by drinking that bottle, and I would have time to calm down my anxiety.

- Do you like Pinot Noir? She asked with an embarrassed smile, as if instantly remembering that I preferred beer.
- I love it. - I winked, not knowing what expression I would draw on my face.
- Shall we sit on the porch?
- Sure. Your place is beautiful.
- I really like it, it has everything I like.
- So neat ... reflects your heart?
- If you're talking purely about how it beats right now, it's completely out of pace. - I almost died when I heard that.

I was sitting in a very modern chair, facing her, about five feet away (if the distance was an inch closer, she would have heard the sigh I let out). I didn't know what to say or do. I never felt so silly and bewildered. I could only focus my eyes on her mouth, on the movement of her lips; I got distracted and lost part of what she was saying. We finished the bottle of wine, picking on some cheeses, when she remembered the food that was on the counter.

- Can I use the lavatory? I need to wash my hands.
- Course. I'll take you there.

She went ahead and opened the door to the guest bathroom, positioned her body in the way, letting me go through just a tiny space between her and the door, inevitably making my body rub against hers. Slightly after I entered, I felt her body pushing me against the sink; me facing the mirror. I felt her warm lips on the back of my neck. She held my hips tightly with both hands to keep me under control. I, at once, held both her hands, so that she could understand that I did not want her to let me go.

Me, while thinking that I had to control my instincts in order not to attack her, end up becoming an easy prey. I was delighted with the new opportunity to sense that smell that had been in my memory for years. I thought, by the way the things got warm, that we would have wild sex. But what came next was a night of touching, acknowledgment, and a lot of affection. We loved each other all night, but calmly, in no hurry. I could tell that neither of us would miss that new chance to live a beautiful and lasting story.

I woke up with coffee in bed. She remembered that I like my coffee with cream and very sweet. She brought crackers, white cheese, watermelon slices and strawberry jam. She put the tray at the end of the bed and came to kiss me. It was only by feeling the warmth of her lips that I believed it was not a dream. However, it didn't take long for her to say "I need to tell you something important." Holy shit, I was pretty sure I had been deluded again. I didn't even know what she was going to say, and my eyes filled with tears.

- I have a trip scheduled to Portugal. I need to go and settle the sale of my house and sign some papers.

- How long do you think you'll be gone?

- Ten to fifteen days.

- That is not so long. I will be waiting for you.

- You got that wrong, Lisa. I don't want you waiting for me.

- I understand. - The tears that were stuck in my eyes fell without me being able to hold them.

- Calm down sweet heart. Don't cry, beautiful! I don't want you to be waiting for me, because I want you to go along with me. We will have a light and unpretentious trip through Portugal, while the paperwork unfolds.

- Me? Traveling with you?

- If you can or want to.

- I want to, of course! How much time do I have to solve a few challenges and prepare myself?

- Oh! You have a lot of time: three days.

- You're Crazy! I will see what I can do, but of course I want to travel with you.

I didn't even think about jobs or money. My boss owed me countless numbers of overtime and accumulated vacations. If I had no money saved, I would sell a kidney, but I would travel with this woman! I went with her blindly, not even knowing which cities we would visit and where we would stay. I just went, and Left everything up to her. I soon found out that she also didn't have a plan, but what does it matter? At that stage, anything we did would be good, just because we were with each other.

As soon as we arrived in Lisbon, Laura went to work on the necessary bureaucracies. We were staying at Fátima's house, a dear friend of hers. The house was very close to the commercial square. We agreed that I would wait for her in a charming café on the square.

I found that place incredible, people of all kinds passing unpretentiously. I remembered, instantly, a story that I projected in my mind, a long time ago. I had no desire to write for years, and the inspiration was gone due to my love frustrations. Me there, sitting in that café, with a glass of green wine, at 10:00 in the morning, felt like being released from an existential inertia.

Since childhood, I always had a pen and a notebook with me. This story came back with "whole body" in my head and soul. It was the story of a son of early immigrants who left a slave to be accused of theft to cover one of his mischief. The words filled the paper and opened my smile. I was happy. I felt like the parts of the gear were finally connecting inside me. I sat there for four hours without realizing it, after drinking a bottle of wine I half of the notebook written. Finally, Laura arrived, kissing me on the lips and apologizing for the delay.

- What did you do so much while I was away?
- Nothing much, I just encounter my old self.
- Didn't you drink a little too much? - Asked Laura.
That question made me laugh.
- I drank a little too little.
- Were you Writing?
- Andalusian Station: my first book.
- How wonderful, my love! - She exclaimed enthusiastically.
Stop the rotation of earth; she called me "my love".

I loved to know how practical she is. She arrived with everything planned and all looked so good that was impossible to oppose. I just trusted in the certainty that fun, delight, and pleasure were guaranteed. It was good to have someone thinking for me for the first time, it made me comfortable. She sat at the table with a map all scrawled with arrows and circles.

- I rented a car starting tomorrow. - She said, still scribbling the map.
- Can I know where we're going? I'm not going to be kidnapped, am I?
- You have been kidnapped, and the ransom I want in bed.
- Can I pay little by little? - I said, winking wildly.
- In soft, sweet little installments, but with no guarantees that I will set you free.

We left early the next day. Had coffee at a bakery, as we didn't want to wake up Fatima, and went on our way. She was driving, and I was responsible for deciphering the map. I am the worst with maps and directions. One thing I didn't know about her is that she was an oenophile. Nor did I know the meaning of that word, but she explained to me that they were wine scholars, either by profession or pleasure. In her case, both. Among other things, she makes reviews of books and articles about wines. I just knew about drinking, so I thought.

The first city on the itinerary was Guimarães, and then we drove up to Braga and arrived in Melgaço, where we would spend three days for her research of "the Quinta do Soalheiro"; the place she spoke about during the whole trip. The place is wonderful, with breathtaking scenery and perfect wines. The town is small, people look at you sympathetically, already recognizing that you are from elsewhere. We stayed in a small bed and breakfast with rooms so close together that our warm nights had to be contained. It was so comfortable to be with her that the tiny room seemed like a five-star luxury suite in a hotel in Dubai.

Laura received a call informing that the paperwork she was expecting to sign would only be ready on Monday. It was still Thursday, so we decided to extend our getaway. She left the roadmap back on my own, I could choose from hotels to restaurants and places to visit. She could never complain of what I picked. She smiled when I said I really wanted to visit the FC Porto Museum. She hates soccer, but she knew that I love it, and yet I could see that she enjoyed the visit. Between Porto and Coimbra, we visited countless churches, museums, cafes, and even a gay nightclub, which neither of us liked. The best was left for the last day before we returned to Lisbon. We had lunch at Dos Dias restaurant and visited the Joanina library, from the University of Coimbra. For two "literate" women like us, there was no more original sightseeing.

We left Coimbra in the late afternoon with the promise of not stopping anywhere else. Laura wanted to take Fátima for dinner, as a way of thanking her for the hospitality and all the legal help she was giving to the process of selling the house. However, when we got home, a beautiful table was already set with cod in the oven that gave off a delicious scent throughout the neighborhood. We drank around three of the wine bottles that we had bought at some wineries where we passed during the trip. Fátima was a very nice person, and I couldn't help wondering if they had any type of relationship in the past. But you know, lesbian vibe is something that you feel very quickly, and if you asked Fátima a question about sex, she would soon answer that what she really liked was penis. She was crazy about penises! My worries dissipated.

The next day was the day set for the end of the house selling process. I decided to spend another day sitting in the same cafe, with a bottle of green wine and my notebook. The story I was writing was something that I could take off for days to travel with Laura and, when I resumed where I left off, I would be even more inspired to continue writing it. The strength of love gave wings to my imagination. In this story, an 8-year-old boy, out of mischief, broke a window in a house on the way to school. The owner of the house made a proposal to the boy that he would not tell his parents if he paid the loss in cash the next day. The boy saw when his mother had placed the money the maid would receive for cleaning that day in a porcelain vase. To make a long story short, the boy took the money, and when the maid questioned why the money was not there, she was immediately accused of theft. It would be a great story about personal discoveries, conducive to being written by someone who discovered in herself the possibility to love.

We spent two more days in Lisbon, before returning home. Yet we strolled in several places in this Portuguese capital. For Laura, this scenario had been her home for many years. She took me to her favorite places, where we met a handful of friends, to whom she introduced me as the woman of her life. A friend of hers even commented that he had heard a lot about me. I did not believe that this woman thought of me, while I was unable to replace her in my heart. But I don't complain about the time we "wasted", because I needed to mature and open myself to love. It was perfect timing.

I didn't know that my mother would be waiting for me at the airport. I had only told my brother what day and what time we would arrive. I did not imagine that my mother would be there, waiting for me. I blushed when I saw her, especially when I realized that Laura had her arm around my waist. I jumped forward, disengaging myself from her arm, trying to reverse the scene. But wait a minute, I was 34 years old and I certainly didn't owe so much explanation to my mother anymore. The truth is that I had never come out of the closet to her. Not out of fear, but because I never took on a serious relationship with a woman before. Maybe, I didn't want to waste an argument for something unimportant.

We went in the car, talking in a relaxed manner, me in the front seat, and Laura in the back, actively participating in the narrative of our trip. She told about the resolution of the sale of the house, wineries and museums. My mother looked at her in the rearview mirror, then looking at me, giving me a wink (which until today, I try to understand what this sign meant). We had not talked about whether we would go to her house or mine or whether each would go to our respective homes. I didn't want to ask about it in front of my mom. At that moment, I looked back, and Laura, seeming to guess my concern, said: "Miss Taylor, I live on the same street as Lisa, just couple of blocks down, thanks for the ride". I helped her get her bags out of the car not knowing what to say, "will I call you?", "Will I see you tomorrow?" That's very tense! She just kissed me on the cheek, went into the front yard and disappeared. I got in the car and found the old woman, already dying to speak, with a chuckle.

- Mother, what face is that?
- Your girlfriend is gorgeous. - I laughed, already relaxing.
- Wait right there, mom. You won't pull me out of the closet like that, without warning.
- Which closet? Who doesn't know you're a dyke?
- Mom! What a rude word.
- Oh Stop, Lisa Taylor. You don't even seem to know your mother. I'm happy for you. But, are you two really dating? Are you going to live together already?
- How is it? Why you think that?
- You, lesbians, are not like that? You guys barely just make out and next thing we get to know is the wedding date.

I threw the bags aside and lay down on the couch with my cell phone by my side, lying to myself that I wasn't expecting her to call. An hour passed without me realizing it, I was reviving everything I had once experienced. I felt the phone vibrate and tried not to be adolescently anxious. "Hey cute" was just what the message said. I promptly replied: "Hey darling". Then her call followed, calming my heart.

- If I tell you that I'm missing you, do you believe? - She said, in a very soft voice.
- I only believe it, because I am already dying of nostalgia.
- Do you want to come to sleep here?
- I'd love to, but I'll be back to work early tomorrow. Come here, I'll cook a light meal for us. Maybe a salad, I don't know.
- You convinced me, I'm going to change clothes and soon be there...

When she came to sleep at my house, I thought I would be stuck, as my mother had predicted. But it was not like that, we naturally continued with our individualities and respective homes. I know that a lot of people live together to save on expenses and, in that regard, I understand and respect. But we were successful enough to have this format as an option. This does not mean that we were not always together and that sleeping in each other's houses would not be a constant. This was great, as we both needed tranquility and silence at night for our duties. She had an endless stack of books to read, analyze and criticize; I was very dedicated to the book I started writing in Portugal and, being alone sometimes helped a lot.

I finished my book in about six months. I, in addition to having my boring job during the day, boycotted me a lot and made a lot of excuses for not sitting down to write, especially when Laura was around. My priority has always been her. I couldn't believe it when I typed the last word and, because I knew myself so well, I didn't reread it so I wouldn't feel like changing anything and boycotting myself for another six months.

I took the courage to give the book to Laura to read, but it was not so much courage. One weekend when I went to sleep at her house, I put a copy of the book on a flash drive and left it at her bedside with a note: "Be honest in your analysis and don't tell me you're reading until you're done. I don't want to have an unnecessary heart attack ". I thought about it every 22 days when she didn't say a single word to me about the manuscript. At the bedside table, I could only see the note. The flash drive, I haven't seen it since the next day when I left it there. On a Friday night, she arrived at my house with a big orange envelope in hands, with a note taped to it. She kissed me on the cheek and said she was going to have dinner with her mother, but that she would come back to sleep with me. As soon as she crossed the door, I picked up the note, which read:

"My love,

What a beautiful and intense story, just like you. I read everything in one shot because it trapped me. Sensitivity, generosity, understanding, and love were explicit in the narrative. For these and other reasons, I realized, very clearly, that I want you forever in my life.

I took the liberty of revising and diagramming your book, which is already approved by the publisher in which I work, to be printed. If you agree with everything, please sign the contract inside the envelope. In this envelope, you will find another envelope with another proposal to be analyzed.

With love, Laura "

I was curious and immediately went to the smaller envelope to see what the other proposal would be. On a silver paper, it read: "Will you marry me?"