Dear God, I’m Gay

Chapter One

Elana

Dear God,

There are no cute guys at the new youth group. There haven't been any cute guys anywhere in a few years. I like guys with long hair and baby faces, but lately not even those. It's like I'm going through backwards puberty. Aren't I supposed to be boy crazy?

Maybe I would have changed my mind if I had actually had youth group with the boys. Boys and girls started out in one room, then were quickly separated so we could have The Talk. As if I wasn't seventeen, well past the age so many people at my school have already lost the purity they should have held so deeply, at least according to the youth pastor's wife. Always purity, never the word sex.

There was a nice girl there though. She knew I was new and sat next to me, in a way that made the nervous butterflies of so many unknown people flutter even faster. She asked my name, and didn't pronounce Elana wrong when she repeated it. Her name is Ruth, and she said she'd give me the downlow on everyone in the youth group, but she'd need my number, because she couldn't trash talk the girls in front of them.

It didn't seem very church-y. She laughed when I said a few ums and uhs, her laugh a loud, honking, hilarious sound, and she shook her head. "I was kidding. It's pretty conservative, but the people aren't too bad. And soon we will be getting out of here. You're a senior too, right? We're almost done." She made getting out seem like such a heavenly experience. It makes me think that maybe it's worse than she let on. But how anyone could be mean to her I can't see. Maybe she's just a city person.

"You can have my number though," I told her, and I didn't know why I said it.

She slipped out her phone, and just like that the pastor’s wife said, "Phones away please. Let's get started."

The youth group conversation was awkward. The pastor's wife, who I learned was Mrs. Preston, led the conversation, but there was this girl, Mary, who answered all the questions. She was the only one who answered any of the questions, and I didn't see how she talked so much with such thin lips. We talked about how church was for long skirts. That you had to dress up, because you would dress up to go to the White House, and God's house was even more important. We talked about how we needed to keep guys from experiencing lust. We talked about dating only when it could lead to marriage.

Basically, all the conversations I've heard every year since being old enough to go to a youth group. It was maybe nice to see that the new church was just like the old one, comfortable, but a part of that made me sad too. I don't know why exactly, except that I just want things to be different. My mom told me this would be an adventure. Dad didn't say much of anything. I think maybe Dad will do better here, working at the office instead of in the factory, but I wouldn't mind if some things changed for me too. Like pastor's wives always thinking they have to keep me from getting knocked up at seventeen. Believe me, the boys at school do that.

I maybe would have talked to Ruth after, but my mom came in five minutes before the end and said I needed to leave right then. I didn't really know why, but I found some of the butterflies in my stomach settle at the thought of leaving church. Or leaving the people at the church. Or whatever. Sorry God. I shouldn't be happy to leave. Maybe my mom was coming to save me from how awkward this was.

"What's so important?" I asked when we got out of there.

"Your dad needs picked up. I wasn't sure how long it would take, and I need to get you home."

My stomach dropped as soon as she said it, because I knew that we were going to pick him up from the bar. Again. But diary, you want to know the really unfair part? When we dragged him out of the bar, quite literally on my part, he puked on my first day of school shirt.

So so far, it's been a pretty crap first day in Water's Edge, Michigan. Maybe tomorrow will be better, but I don't know that I really think that. Starting my senior year, knowing no one? I'll just keep my head down.

Maybe I'll finally be able to keep up a prayer every day, God. I really want to try.

In Jesus' Name,

Amen

Chapter Two
Ruth

Dear Giant Spaghetti Monster In The Sky,

I'm sure my therapist isn't going to find that introduction funny. Still, if everyone else is going to keep pretending like this isn't some fucked up conversion therapy, I'm at least going to be true to myself. I'm only doing this so I don't get sent to "camp", get kicked out, or get electrodes connected to places they really shouldn't be. I suppose that means I can write to you every once in a while.

I asked my therapist what to talk about, and he said whatever I want. He promised not to read it, just make sure I write. I don't believe anything he says, which is why I'm writing at all and not simply copying down the US Constitution. Because, as much as it sucks right now, I don't want to be kicked out of my parents’ house. I love them or whatever.

Tomorrow is the first day of senior year, and I think things may be looking up, mainly because I'm almost out of here. I've heard from some online friends that it can help not to live with my parents if I want to have a relationship with them despite their homophobia. When things are getting heated, I can just leave. Though I suppose I do that now anyway. I just go on long walks till 3 am when dinner gets dicey.

There was something else that was good about today. I met this girl, Elana. I'm sure I'm not supposed to be writing about girls, but man, she was beautiful. Her blonde hair is messy curly, and her eyes are this green so bright, not quite color-contact bright, but close. Her hands were small and her nails are neat. I'm not going to make jokes about why that is important.

I'm afraid I may have been a lot for her though. I made jokes, asked for her name, laughed way too loud. But she didn't run, so that was nice. Plus, she even said I could have her number before the pastor's wife came and ruined my chance, and her scooby-doo dog too. She does have a dog, actually, I think, and I shouldn't insult her dog. Sorry doggo.

But maybe Elana and I can see each other tomorrow. Maybe we can even get each other’s numbers. There's no other school in town, so unless she drives to church or her parents drive her out to the Christian school (God forbid), then we will get to be together. Is it bad for me to hope that she has no one to sit with at lunch? Of course, it's wrong, but at the same time I would love the chance to go sweep her off her feet, save her when she may have to sit alone. Being new is never easy. I've never actually done it, of course, I've always been in this town. Still, that's what everyone said, and I do remember just changing from middle school to high school being hard, even when I already knew everyone. Plus, when I came out, it was like a whole new school anyway.

Which also reminds me that Elana will know I'm gay. It's like the town's worst kept secret. Maybe it won't matter, but probably it will. None of the girls will talk to me anymore. Sure, maybe it's not the Christian school, Calvary Baptist, but everyone is pretty explicitly Christian. My best friend is a gay guy and we make a good pair, but no one else really branches into our group. Maybe she can.

I know that's silly, but I know something else that is silly. Before laying down, getting ready to write this and go to bed, I thought about what I would wear to the first day of school. I have never cared, yet here I am, trying to figure out if the red wonder woman t-shirt will show off my dark hair or if I should go with my fake leather jacket that everyone hates. It doesn't matter, she's not gay, she just needs friends. I think I'll wear the wonder woman t-shirt.

Whatever.

Amen.