



*2 PARTS
OF DESIRE*

Luisa

I was abroad for some time and when I returned my family found a different me. I was changed. Age? 16, maybe 17. When you look back at a pleasant experience, you do remember individual episodes, but those 3 months when I was away are a complete blank. My fears and worries are hard to remember. I was going through such a hard time. I was having huge problems accepting myself, at times also becoming physically ill. I stopped eating, and just got worse.

2 things upset me most, 2 journeys I had to go through at the same time. I was coming to terms with my sexuality but also in doing so I had to come to terms with my faith. I was very religious. I built my life, my relations with people, on a clear system that explained the progression of life. Once you start questioning your sexuality, you start questioning everything, even the presence of God in my life. There's a lot of instability. I used to attend a prayer group & I was so upset that I confided in the group leader. The biggest mistake of my life! Awful, awful, awful! "This is just a phase...you'll get over it...don't ever spend time alone with girls." At 15, all I could do was follow her advice to suppress my feelings. And her rejection of my homosexuality devastated me. I felt unnatural, improper. Guilty. And then my first kiss changed everything. It broke the uncertainties & confirmed who I was...like the kiss at the end of Snow White! The guilt was thrown out of the window, "fuck it, this is me!" I switched courses at University, choosing to do stuff I truly desired.

Mum was confused, "I don't think I ever met a gay person, a lesbian." She probably had! She'd be with her friends and they'd pass a derogatory comment & she'd feel the need to say something, as my mother, to protect me. She found this difficult; she wasn't comfortable with her friends knowing. With dad it was quite funny, my sister and I didn't know how to tell him, so we mentioned that we established an LGBTI group at University. "OK, can I go watch TV now?" Now they're fine, really. In fact, we didn't have problems with the family, it's more with ourselves that we struggled.

Thinking back to those 3 months still hurts, I realise how much time I've lost from life, how much I had been hurt by people giving the wrong advice. Teenagers need to find someone they can trust for gay-affirmative support. I don't want people to have someone like that first person I confided in. I want to start changing things, which is why I'm active in *We Are*. I want heterosexual people to stop saying 'faggot'!

Next battle? Let's get *We Are* into Junior College, where people are possibly much more vulnerable & confused.