

LOVE, THE SINNERS

Sample Packet

By Maggie Smith

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SYNOPSIS: While preparing for a normal year at their Catholic high school, a group of queer teenagers are suddenly faced with a new series of anti-LGBTQ+ rules created by their city's archdiocese, threatening to expel each one of them. Tired of their school's "hate the sin, love the sinner" mentality, the teenagers turn to malicious compliance as a means of protest, boycotting every academic material and lesson plan that they argue goes against Church teachings.

CHARACTERS

ASH (they/them) — senior; the president of the Underground Queer Alliance; strong, loud, a natural-born leader; must be played by a non-binary, agender, genderfluid, or otherwise gender non-conforming performer

RICHIE (he/him) — sophomore; has only recently come out; lighthearted, kind, stubborn when he wants to be; still gives everyone the benefit of the doubt; must be played by a transgender performer

LAINE (they/them) — junior; viewed as a rebel, doesn't care enough to be one; always lounging, constantly getting written up for violating the uniform, must be played by a non-binary, agender, genderfluid, or otherwise gender non-conforming performer

WILDE (she/her) — senior; outspoken and hardworking; always ready to say yes to anything; thinks outside of the box

PERCY (she/he/they) — junior; all smiles but unfortunately cares about being polite more than his own well-being; not yet out to their parents; always has snacks or a pen to lend someone; must be played by a genderfluid, or otherwise gender non-conforming performer

CAM (he/him) — senior; the absolute most fun to be around; full of energy, laid-back, and charismatic; must be played by a transgender performer

MIA ROCKWELL (she/her) — a guidance counselor who is genuinely good at her job; keeps everything students tell her confidential, even if it could come at the cost of her job; must be played by a transgender performer

AMANDA GARRETT (she/her) — the head of administration stuck between following the policies set in place by the Archdiocese and protecting her students

SETTING

An "all-girls" Catholic high school

ACT ONE
SCENE SEVEN
HEY, RICHIE

[MIA'S office, after school, four days after the protest begins. MIA sits at her desk, waiting patiently. She fiddles with whatever is on her desk, rearranging things to look organized. RICHIE knocks on the door.]

RICHIE

Hi, Ms. Rockwell.

MIA

Hey, Richie! Come on in!

[He takes a seat across the desk. The silence is so weird, in a way that it can only be between a teacher and a student where neither knows what to say.]

MIA

So, it's been an eventful week.

RICHIE

Kind of a bad week, honestly.

MIA

How are you feeling?

[RICHIE lets his head fall onto the desk.]

MIA

That bad?

RICHIE

I can't put it into words. But yeah.

MIA

Do you want to try those breathing exercises I—

RICHIE

[Sudden] Am I going to be kicked out of school?

[The air in the room changes completely. This has been on his mind for a while. MIA doesn't know how to broach this subject. Like, at all.]

MIA

They haven't put any rules into place yet.

RICHIE

No, I know. Everyone keeps saying that, but what happens if they do?

MIA

Then it most likely wouldn't be going into effect until next year.

RICHIE

I still want to go to school here next year, though.

MIA

Then it means we have a year to fight it.

RICHIE

And if we don't win?

MIA

How old are you? Sixteen?

RICHIE

Fifteen.

MIA

Fifteen. Okay. I was twenty when I started my transition. It was... Hard. You're young. You're very young. Way too young to be facing things like this, and I'm sorry it's happening here, of all places. I want you to be safe. Your parents want you to be safe. Your friends, too.

RICHIE

I know.

MIA

You've got good people in your life, bud. I don't want you to think the world is a bad place. It's not always. But there are horrible people who do horrible things. And right now this is one of those horrible things. But Rich, you're one of the strongest kids we've got here.

I'm not a kid.

RICHIE

It doesn't feel like it, huh?

MIA

This isn't kid stuff.

RICHIE

No. It's not. *[Beat.]* I... Don't know what's going to happen. I don't know if you'll have to change schools or if I'm going to get fired. I don't know what's going to come out of any of this. But if we do have to leave, I don't want you walking out thinking that the rest of your life is going to be like this. You have a good future.

MIA

Is this some kind of "it gets better" talk?

RICHIE

It does.

MIA

I know. Everyone keeps telling me that. It's like they're all worried about me— That this is going to make me hate myself or something. I don't. I love who I am. I'm great.

RICHIE

You are.

MIA

Then why are there so many other people trying to convince me that I'm not?

RICHIE

[A beat.]

Doing any volunteering, lately?

MIA

Animal shelter.

RICHIE

MIA

Oh, fun!

RICHIE

We've got this one chihuahua, Zelda. The shelter let me name her, she likes me the most. My mom and dad are so close to letting me get her.

MIA

Yeah?

RICHIE

Yeah. They said if I keep my grades up then we can talk about it. I just have to wait until the end of the quarter.

MIA

And how are classes?

RICHIE

All of the English teachers are pissed off.

MIA

I've been in the faculty room. I can tell.

RICHIE

Yeah.

MIA

And how are the others doing with all of that?

RICHIE

I mean, I know the seniors are all on board. They haven't read a single page for class yet. I mean, Cam wasn't going to anyways, but still... I really didn't think that this would last this long. But I'm not feeling optimistic.

MIA

Isn't it a good sign that they're not giving up?

RICHIE

Yeah. And nothing's changed.

MIA

Things don't change overnight.

RICHIE

But shouldn't they change after a month?

[Silence.]

RICHIE

It feels stupid. Trying to fight all of this. No one's going to change their mind. And...

MIA

And?

RICHIE

It's not fair, I know. But... When I was younger, everyone always told me to find an adult if I was in trouble. If I needed help. And now all I'm doing is going to adults and it feels like no one has the answer.

MIA

No, I guess I don't have the answer. But if we keep going the route we're on, you protesting, me talking with Ms. Garrett, maybe even getting other teachers onboard, we might be able to find an answer together.

RICHIE

So, what are we supposed to do?

MIA

Get people talking.

[Transition into:]

ACT ONE
SCENE EIGHT
POLITICAL CANVASSING FOR GAY PEOPLE

[The students stand, facing outward. They are all separated, talking to different teachers.]

CAM

Hello!

WILDE

How are you doing?

ASH

I'm sure you remember me.

RICHIE

From class. Yesterday.

LAINE

Haven't seen you since last year.

PERCY

I'm Percy!

[PERCY bares their teeth in what could be a smile.]

PERCY

I also don't know why I've been sent to talk to you. I think it's safe to say that I'm an overachiever, but I need you to know before I get anything out that I am beyond stressed to be having any kind of conversation with you about any topic whatsoever.

WILDE

I'll keep this quick. Ish.

ASH

I'm sure you've got a lot of things to do.

RICHIE

I wanted to talk to you about—

CAM

You've probably heard—

LAINE

It's not really a secret that—

ALL

We haven't been doing our English homework.

PERCY

I promise I'm a good student. I know I was never in your class, but—

WILDE

I know that look on your face.

RICHIE

I'm sure that if I were a teacher, I'd be frustrated, too.

LAINE

This argument would be a lot more impactful if it came from someone who actually tried at school—

WILDE

But you can trust me. I have a scholarship.

PERCY

Last year I spent four hours each night doing homework, I promise you I don't like this any more than you do. I'm shooting to be Valedictorian next year, so you and I are for sure on the same page when I say that homework is so important to mold young minds—

LAINE

But just trust me when I say that this is necessary.

WILDE

Invaluable, even.

CAM

You know what this is about, don't you?

ASH

You can say queer. It's fine. That's what I am.

PERCY

Oh, no, I'm not coming out to you, I've already been out. But I, uh, appreciate your support?

WILDE

Oh, you have a gay brother.

CAM

You have a gay brother?

RICHIE

You have a gay brother!

ASH

You have a gay brother.

LAINE

[To the rest of the students] Are they all the same gay brother?

PERCY

The odds of having a queer sibling can actually be solved with a really simple mathematical formula—

RICHIE

I'm sure you can guess that I'm telling you all of this because I see you as a safe adult. I do a lot of work with the Big Brother program, so I know how important it is to have—

WILDE

Someone I can trust.

ASH

A really good teacher.

PERCY

And if I'm honest there's a possibility that I've been over-exerting myself to prove that queer students are beneficial to our academic environment, which I'm sure if you had ever had me in class you'd be able to recognize, but I wasn't allowed in your class because my understanding of science is too advanced for the course you teach—

RICHIE

I wouldn't ask this if I didn't mean it. I need your help.

CAM

I need your help.

LAINE

I need... Your help. Please.

CAM

You saw what I had to say at that meeting. The new policies against queer students are dangerous for us.

WILDE

The past three years here have been great for me.

ASH

And I think this year could be great, too.

LAINE

But what's going to happen when, let's face it, all of your cool students get expelled.

RICHIE

When I leave, who's going to teach me American History?

ASH

Earth Sciences?

WILDE

World Religions?

CAM

Psychology?

LAINE

Whatever the fuck it is you teach?

PERCY

I absolutely cannot handle any teacher being mad at me in any capacity, so what I'm really asking is for you to agree to no longer teach any material that could be argued to go against Catholic teaching, in order to help and support your queer students.

LAINE

It's math? I'm sure there has to be something about math that goes against God.

CAM

I'll even take a maybe at this point.

LAINE

Did Jesus even use math?

RICHIE

If you need help looking through your syllabus to find what to refuse to teach, I've got you covered. I wrote a list of problematic moments in American History starting at Plymouth Rock—

LAINE

I'm aware he was a carpenter. But did he use math?

PERCY

[Shouting] Just please say yes, please, please, say yes, please!

[A beat. PERCY is gasping for breath.]

PERCY

Thank you for your time.

[END OF EXCERPT

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