

**CHANGE** by KYLIE T.

Hello. I am Ray Espenanzo. This is my story.

### **SEVENTH GRADE**

“Hi loser!” says Mona.

I was just minding my own business when Mona came over and snatched my diary.

“Let’s see what wittle Ray baby wrote in her wittle diary!”

She opens it up and starts to read it out loud.

“Oo her parents got in a fight! Aw is mommy going to divorce daddy?”

I am sick to my stomach. She reads something and her eyes widen. I snatch back my notebook.

“EVERYBODY! RAY IS GAY!” Mona screams.

I fight back tears as I run to the bathroom. Why me?! What did I do to Mona?! I hear someone walk in. Pink high tops. It’s Evie Wepler. I smile just at the thought of her.

### **EIGHTH GRADE**

I have to make Evie notice me. She is one of those popular girls who is expected to have a cute boyfriend. She does not have one yet.

This year Mona AND Evie are in my science class. To make Evie notice me, I’m going to wear no more hoodies. I will wear dresses and crop tops.

Today, I’m wearing a pink shirt with a white skirt.

When everyone found out I was a part of LGBTQ they hated me way more than before. They still do. Being popular doesn’t seem fun either though. You are surrounded by fake friends. I’ve seen Mona say things about Evie that would get her suspended.

I trot to the bus in a good mood. But Eliza is standing there. She is the third most popular girl in school. The first most popular girl is Evie and the second is Mona. But Mona is the biggest bully. Eliza is the second and Evie doesn’t bully.

“Are you trying to be popular? Well you look even more ridiculous!” laughs Eliza.

“Shut up,” says Evie firmly.

She helped me out, but she went back to ignoring me. I wish I could be noticed!

### **THE NEXT DAY**

Today I am wearing a coca cola crop top and ripped jeans. It’s more casual than yesterday, but it’s still not a hoodie! Maybe Evie will notice me today!

I take a seat next to Evie in algebra. She stares at her phone.

“Evie! Phone up!” says Mr. Browne.

She shoves her phone in her backpack.

### **AFTER CLASS**

I walk in the hallway alone. It’s lunch time so I head to the rooftop. I always eat lunch up there because it’s peaceful and you can see the whole city.

The wind blows my hair as I take a seat by the edge. I pull out my bento and eat my sushi. It’s a strangely warm fall day, and the trees are still full of leaves.

Suddenly a paper airplane flies over, and it has a note on it.



I hear giggles as I open the airplane up. Planted in the middle of the plane, a scribbly message is sprawled upon the paper.

### **“LOSER”**

I look over, and sure enough Eliza and Mona dart down the stairs. I sigh and throw the plane off the roof. It lands on someone. OH NO. It’s Evie! She opens it up and sees the message. She looks around and throws it away.

That was close! If she saw me, she would hate me!

### **A MONTH LATER**

It's been a month since I've stopped wearing hoodies, but I'm not giving up. Today my outfit is a Thrasher shirt with a skirt on the side complete with red vans.

I slowly walk to the bus stop. I sit by myself at the back of the bus on the one-person seat. Evie sits at the front of the bus.

At class, we work on x and y axis. Evie looks like she's struggling, but I leave her alone.

### **THAT NIGHT**

I need to tell Evie the truth. She won't notice me, so I will confess to her tomorrow. I will probably get rejected and get bullied more, but it's worth a shot.

### **THE NEXT DAY**

I am wearing a hoodie today. I nervously walk to the bus stop.

### **AT LUNCH BREAK**

I go to the spot Evie normally sits at. I sit next to her.

"Erm, hi," I say awkwardly.

"Hi?" she says.

"I have a confession."

"Tell me," says Evie.

"I've been changing my style for you, because I love you."

"You never had to change."

"Huh?"

