

Girls Who Like Boys Who Like Boys

Lucy Neville

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Women and Gay Male Pornography
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Lucy Neville
University of Leicester
Leicester, UK

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To Anna Damski: you have been, and always shall be, my friend.

Foreword

This Girl Who Likes Boys: A Personal History

My sister had a Take That video with the boys on tour. There was a scene with them in a jacuzzi, naked. I was about 9, and fascinated with the human body—so often clothed and hidden—unveiled, be it strapping young men or my elderly grandma. But for once I wasn't that interested in the nudity *per se*, I was preoccupied by the way they were with each other, the intimacy, the *flirting*. *Look at how they touch each other.*

Cut to doing GCSEs at school. At house parties, the boys would ask us girls to make out with each other while they watched. My stock reply was, 'only if you do the same'. I think maybe some of my girlfriends were more amused by the politics of this response than intrigued to see its outcome, but none of them ever objected to this deal. The boys did object. However, they also often conceded. I was fascinated by watching them kiss. It was different from watching these very same boys get off with girls. They were softer, more vulnerable somehow. The kiss was paradoxically often more gentle than the snogs I saw so often between boys and girls. Hesitant, uncertain. They were beginning to get stubble, and the contrast of the masculinity of the hair alongside the softness of their mouths—for boys' mouths were soft, I noted, and often just as plush and plump as girls'—had a kind of erotic hypnosis over me.

Cut to university. 2001. Watching *Top Gun* in the common room. Ice Man biting his teeth at Maverick, an exaggerated signal of—*what?*—sexual desire, surely? Going back to my dorm, thinking—we have the internet now. Someone, somewhere, must have *done* something with this. Finding a story where they were lovers as well as rivals. Brutal, angry sex, but it was right somehow, not about gender or politics, but a perfectly enclosed bubble of their relationship, the two of them, not the rest of the world. And *hot*. After that, seeing more and more films through a queer lens. McManus and Fenster. They must be doing it, surely? The film barely even tries to *hide* the fact they're a couple. There must be something about that on the internet, too? There was. It was *good*, got me off quickly, like only the very best heterosexual porn could.

Rediscovering these stories many years later, but this time finding there's whole websites dedicated to m/m pairings. Reading, and reading. Watching the few het porn videos saved on my laptop less and less, preferring to use the gay sites.

Remembering how I always liked this.

Wondering why.

Leicester, UK

Lucy Neville

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