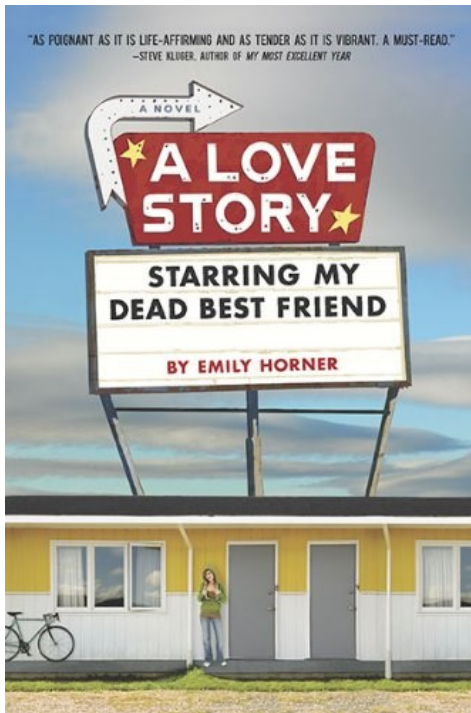


# A LOVE STORY STARRING MY DEAD BEST FRIEND



*Young Adult*

**By Emily Horner**

ISBN: 978-1-101-42749-1

## **Book Summary:**

A young woman learns more about herself during and after journeying on a bicycle to take her cremated friend's ashes to California.

## **Summary of Concerns:**

This book contains inexplicit sexual activities; profanity; derogatory term; alternate sexualities; controversial religious and social commentary; reference to suicide; alcohol use; and reference to drug use.

**2**/5

**Teen Guidance**  
BookLooks Review Rating

| Page | Content   |
|------|---|
| 6    | “Satan didn’t call me a dyke in front of the whole school.”   |
| 21   | So deep in winter, summer seemed like nothing so much as an illusion someone had made up to keep us from committing suicide en masse.   |
| 26   | Something happened after he came out, and everything got very tense for a while. ...Whether he quit or got kicked out, he was out of the church choir, out of church altogether. He flew his Gay Pride flag high and made lewd comments about Bible study club.   |
| 30   | “After they’re dead seems like a stupid time to finally listen to someone, and it seems like everyone keeps trying to tell me what I can feel or can’t feel. I’m still trying to figure out if I believe in God or I don’t believe in God or believe in a God I don’t even want anything to do with, whether I’m even supposed to hope against all the hope in the world that there’s still a place for Julia somewhere. I thought it was that complicated. But it’s not. I just can’t not sing for her. I can’t.”  |
| 38   | And she turned right at me and said, loud enough for everyone to hear, “You just leave me alone, dyke.”   |
| 50   | He turned away sharply. “And I’m not flattered that you wanted to fuck my girlfriend.” ...“Why are you the one who’s going after me?” I snapped. “Is it like some gay person thing?” ...“It’s not party time for any of us! I don’t see why he gets more slack than me just because they were having sex.”  |
| 52   | “It’s not fair. You keep your hair short and admit to liking math and don’t wear makeup—which, by the way, I am not allowed to do—and don’t take an interest in fashion—which, by the way, I am also not allowed to do—and you make it to sixteen years old without ever having had a boyfriend, or even getting kissed, and everybody decides that you’re a lesbian. Even if Heather Galloway had never told everybody that I was.”<br>“Lissa says that homophobia is a tool the patriarchy uses to scare straight people into gender conformity,” he deadpanned.<br>...There was not and had never been a single boy who I really found attractive in an I-want-to-take-off-your-pants-now kind of way. |
| 63   | “I’m not saying it’s right, you know? And I’m not saying it makes any sense that some people draw lines between musicals or flannel or haircuts and who you want to make out with. God knows if shoe shopping and makeup could un-gay a person, I’d have had an easier time of things.”   |
| 69   | I didn’t believe that God told some guy, however many thousands of years ago, “Hey, build a ginormous boat in this desert over here.”<br>...And maybe, if God ever did tell people what to do, it was to stick up for these crazy stupid things that no one in their right mind would ever do otherwise.  |
| 86   | And he kissed me.<br>...I have been kissed, for the very first time ever!   |
| 87   | “Got locked out,” said Kris. “I was a little too eager not to see you having sex.”  |
| 90   | “I spent a good year or two being a total bitch because I didn’t want anyone to find out that I was gay, including myself, and by the time I managed to deal with my issues and get myself a girlfriend . . . she was the one who could absolutely not deal with the remotest possibility of anyone finding out. I mean, we both wanted to keep things secret. I didn’t want to get suspended, I wanted to stay on the nuns’ good side, I wanted to keep my friends. But if we’d  |

| Page | Content  |
|------|--|
|      | <p>been found out, I'd have survived. Eventually the dust would have settled and I'd have picked myself up. Not Gianna. Her family's so conservative that she isn't even allowed to kiss a boy until she's practically married, and she really and truly bought into it. She'd have a crisis of conscience and break up with me on Monday, and by Thursday we'd be back together again. So we kissed in supply closets and passed notes to each other in really terrible Latin, or ciphers, and . . . that kind of secrecy was fun for about twenty minutes."</p>  |
| 121  | <p>I had mixed feelings about going into this strange church. It was hard to tell just by looking at this squat, concrete, unchurched building whether it would turn out to be the Fundamentalist Bible House of God Doesn't Like You Very Much Right Now.</p>   |
| 122  | <p>And I remembered Julia telling me that it takes a lot of courage to sing badly. (And God doesn't care either way, she said. The person beside you cares, but he's not God, and who cares what he thinks anyway?) Which made me smile in spite of myself.</p>  |
| 125  | <p>And once, when someone passed by in the hallway at school whispering something about me being a lesbian, she flirted with me shamelessly until the bell rang, in front of Ollie.</p>  |
| 138  | <p>"There was this girl," I said. "I mean—" All of a sudden I felt flustered, and added, "We were just friends."<br/>         "No such thing."<br/>         "We were."<br/>         "Look. Despite what you may have heard, people have sex all the time with people they don't love, or particularly care about, or sometimes can't even stand. So why in the world do people say that it's just friends, like it doesn't matter as much, if you're not having sex? Real friendship is true and forever and with all your heart. It's not Relationship Lite."</p>   |
| 141  | <p>"Most ways I look at the statistics, the best thing you can do on a day like this is watch TV and drink beer."<br/>         ...She returned with two dark bottles, but I waved off the one she held out to me.<br/>         "I don't really . . ." I tried to smile.<br/>         ...And it wasn't that I had never shared when we were over at Ollie's place and someone brought out some grape schnapps, just to taste how awful it was, not because we wanted to get drunk. We had all sampled from Ollie's parents' wine cellar, for a taste of what it was like to be an adult, what it was like to be allowed to do things.</p>   |
| 168  | <p>I stretched out and touched my palm to her chin, and I could feel my fingers tremble when I kissed her with all the enthusiasm of someone who'd only just discovered kissing. She kissed me back like she meant it, her breath hot and near.</p>  |
| 175  | <p>"When did you stop thinking it was wrong?"<br/>         "Being a lesbian?"<br/>         I hesitated. "Yeah."<br/>         "Not until Gianna," she said, after a long pause. "For a long time I could pretend to think about it abstractly. I just about convinced myself it was about obscure points of theology, not about my own real life and my future and whether I would ever kiss someone on the mouth. Then I saw how sad and scared and hurting Gianna was, and for the first time I got angry with the unfairness of it all. And when I was done with being angry, I was done with being scared too. One of us had to be."<br/>         ..."You're not allowed to set foot in Sephora, but you're allowed to be gay?"<br/>         "They're big on hippie Jesus, you know? Turn the other cheek, love your enemies."<br/>         ..."It's not about just sitting around hoping that things will get better. It's that—if you believe</p> |

| Page | Content   |
|------|---|
|      | in God like my dad does, if you believe that we're only seeing a tiny sideways glance at all the things that are working themselves out for the best in the end, then there's no point in flailing around trying to make things better by killing people. It's like when you're trying to cut your own hair, and it doesn't look right, so you just cut more and more trying to fix it, and it just keeps getting worse. Except, you wind up with dead people." |
| 177  | "I don't know. I believe in God sometimes, but I can't just say for sure that everything's going to be okay. It's too glib. It's like the people who are hurting right now don't count for anything. But I do know that I want to live in the kind of world where people can get past getting even with each other. I want to live in the kind of world where people can manage to love their enemies."   |
| 185  | I felt decadent and dissolute and bad, and I loved every minute. Of course, it was all ridiculous. I felt all abuzz with mischief and sex and drugs when we were doing nothing more than sneaking cans of PBR and kissing on the futon.   |
| 218  | Highlight(pink) - Page 218 · Location 2477<br>She turned a corner and we were in a nook where no one could see us. Books on two sides, and a vast picture window overlooking the swampy creek side where kids would go to smoke pot at lunch.   |
| 219  | "According to this, I'm not a girl."<br>"Yeah, me neither. So that makes us . . ."<br>"Gay men?"  |
| 230  | "I don't even know if I'm gay."<br>..."It's one girl," I said. "How am I supposed to know whether I like girls in general, or only girls, or this one girl who rescued me from a flash flood? One is a terrible sample size to get any meaningful data from."   |
| 244  | I told her that Heather had kissed me in the library, and that she had played the clarinet for me under my window, and that she had taken me out for French pastries and told me I was pretty.  |

| Profanity/Derogatory Term | Count |
|---------------------------|-------|
| Ass                       | 5     |
| Bitch                     | 3     |
| Dyke                      | 2     |
| Fuck                      | 1     |
| Piss                      | 1     |