

Kissing the South Mouth

By O. Grey

“Don’t be foolish. You don’t even know what love is,” my mom said. She sat across the table, but never acknowledged me over her menu.

I leaned over the table, and my knuckles grew numb as I tightened my grip on its edge. “Oh—Right, I forgot. You’re the expert on love. That’s why Dad left you for *Shannon*, huh?” I regretted the words as soon as they left my mouth. I leaned back in my seat, watching the color leave her face, as she met my eyes.

Her mouth pressed in a hard line before she spoke. “What do you want for lunch?” she said, ignoring my comments. The smile lines that used to be apparent around her mouth seemed to be fading. Either she had another Botox treatment or hasn’t smiled in very a long time. She wasn’t always this rigid.

“Hmm—how ‘bout a new mom? Or even better, a magical fucking fairy to install the ‘my daughters’ a freaking lesbian’ update into that narrow minded brain of yours,” I said before taking a gulp of my Coke, and crunching down on an ice-cube.

The menu dropped between us. Mom slammed her palms flat against the table, tipping over the salt shaker and creating a ripple in my drink. Her always perfect up-do fell out of place, a strand of her hair now resting on her cheek.

“You shut your mouth.” She looked around us to make sure no one was watching, and whispered at me. “You have no idea how hard I’ve worked to keep the attention off our family after your father, and you want to pull a stunt like *this*.” She gestured at me with her hand, as if my presence was some sort of disgrace.

“A stunt like this? I am a lesbian, a dike, homosexual. I kiss the *south mouth*. Vagina, for crying out loud,” I said.

“Vagina!” I turned around to see a worried mother, glaring at me, with her hand over a little boy’s mouth.

Mom held her finger in my face and scowled. “Monday—Monday, I am taking you to Pastor Mike and we are going to get you exorcised. You are speaking evil, and I will *not* tolerate another second of this ridiculous behavior.”

Evil. The word echoed in my head as the world around me slowed. No voices or chatter, only the hum of a fluorescent light somewhere in the distance. The window beside us was fogged from the contrast of cold rain outside and our heated conversation.

“Are... y’all ready to order?” said the waitress, smacking her gum as she spoke. Her presence seemed to startle Mom.

“Uh—Yes.” She looked down at her menu.

“You know what? I think I’ll take the Sunday special. Hold the *holy water*,” I said, sliding out of my seat and pushing past the waitress.

I didn’t look at my mom as I walked away. But when my hand touched the door handle, she finally spoke up.

“And just where do you think you’re going?”

I flipped her off and let the jingle of the door speak for itself.

