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My First Time

It was warm that day; the sun was shining and the sky was clear and blue. Anyone could tell it was spring. We just got out of school and now everyone is waiting for their bus in different parts. I was with my friends; Diego, a classmate, was with his, but there was one who stood out the most. He was older, taller, with a dark brown skin tone, short hair on his head, a stern look on his face, and swirling his white earphones by his side. His posture was good, upright, something not overly up but not slouchy.

There was a slight oppression in my chest, and I felt my heart stop for a brief moment before restarting at its normal rate. A sense of nervous joy came over me, becoming what felt like the happiest moments ever. My stomach revolved a bit and I felt myself getting warmer, and my face got red. My friend even commented and joked about it. Hopefully, there was no hard staring on my part, but there was eye contact between us at that moment. It was the first time I ever felt what they call butterflies in my stomach.

I purposely went a few people behind him so that maybe if he sat close, we could talk. He had to sit close if he was friends with a sixth-grader. Bob, our bus driver, gave the front third part of the bus to sixth graders, with no assigned seating. I lost him getting on. With less hope of talking to him, I sat in the farthest seat possible for a sixth-grader. Seeing Diego's friends scattered throughout the bus, I lost more hope. In the back seat were two guys; one had their head down. Not thinking it was him; mostly everyone had a dark skin tone on that bus.

Our hands were about to get warm thanks to ‘Tennis’ despite the warm bus. The tennis we played was not with a racket or a ball. It’s when two people hold hands and start hitting each other to see how long they can last. The one who lets go first is the loser. My hand was suffering most of the time, but I won many rounds.

Being done playing with just 6 of us, we were going to play with more people since they wanted to join. I didn’t play tennis with the others because my hand was red and in pain. A big part of the bus got along. We were our own bus family, so it was nothing against them. My friend later played with the one who was from the back seat, and that’s when the other kid put their head up and it was him. He asked me if I wanted to play tennis with him, and took off his earphones to play. I accepted nervously and started playing with him.

I’ll call him by his last name, Salvador. As we introduced each other, I figured out he was an eighth-grader, two years older than me. He had wide shoulders. His fingers were chubby and soft, with what I thought were big hands with a firm touch that was soft enough for me to feel safe; he had dark brown eyes that didn’t pop much because his eyes were small and almond shape; he had shiny skin that let them have their pop. His eyes were pretty nonetheless. He wasn’t sociable with everyone. He had fewer people to talk to than I thought.

Five minutes away from my bus stop didn’t seem too long to either of us. As we were playing tennis, I got the lead with the “ladies first,” in a sarcastic tone. Being annoyed, I started strong and hit him with a good amount of strength. Something so that he felt a little pain but not the whole force, because then I’d have nothing left. He felt it and he laughed, saying “You hit hard.” Yet he started very smoothly; he merely responded with something between a smack and a brush of his hand for the next few rounds, getting a little stronger each time. Waiting until my hand got normal, he hit me hard. And with each hit, we were getting stronger.

But we got along so well in between it all. We understood each other, and though it was our first time talking, it wasn't uncomfortable. I felt a joy that I never felt before. Our hands started getting redder, mine was getting bright red dots, and now people were watching us betting on who would win, but with no money in between.

We kept on going until the 'end'. Only stopping since we were at my bus stop and I even went last. As I got up from my seat, deciding that I would stop there, he knew he had won then and there. The people who said he would win were cheering, while the ones who cheered for me were like "It's because she has to go." But something outshone him, his smile. His white teeth shone when he smiled. And his smile was arrogantly directed at me. Yet I didn't complain.

Getting off, it didn't matter that my hand was bright red, or that it hurt a lot or the fact that at home I had to make an excuse to not get lectured. I was infatuated with what I just had going on inside me. It's pretty good that my pain tolerance was high, and that I lasted the whole time without letting go. It was the first time my hands ever touched someone else's hand and I felt something different than what I felt as a young girl holding my mom or dad's hand. And honestly, tennis just made me fall even harder. I'm no pain lover, but I would love to go back to playing tennis with him.

Even though playing tennis helped so that what I felt became something deeper, the whole game helped to say who would stay until the end and who left. Almost prophetically, it helped decide who would stand more pain until they let go. The pain was huge, but giving in wasn't an option. The hits were no charm, but the way I got held was out of this world. The heat wasn't only in our hands but also at the moment.

Tennis had a bigger impact on me, something more long-term than who won and who lost the round. The internal mark tennis left on me wasn't going to go away with cold water. I

lost either way. Winning feelings weren't an option, but it happened. I lost more starting that day because I fell in love.

Love at first sight isn't mostly because someone is good-looking; it's how they make one feel. Something contrary to what I thought. Anyone could be in love at any point in their life. Love appears whenever it wishes; love is learned; love is unique to each individual. Love is something to show and tell. There is no right way to love, and there's no way to turn back that love. Love isn't specific. It isn't immature to say "I love you" to anyone at any point in life.