



# REAPROPIANT-NOS de les nostres vides

NIN

Who do I love?  
And if so, how many of them?

I grew up with an older sister and with my parents, who had fallen in love when they were 15 and were already married by the time they were 18 years old. Their relationship was a lot like a Disney movie – first kiss, first love and married happily ever after – a dream everyone wants to pursue, right?

Of course, there have been some moments in my parents' relationship which were not as Disney-worthy – after all, their first kiss happened by the garbage containers outside of a council flat in Vienna. Still, this was what I imagined a perfect relationship had to look like – including special anniversaries such as the Silver, Golden or Diamond Jubilee. In Vienna, you are even invited to the City Hall, and the Mayor declares his admiration for this special merit. In general, Austria commemorates academic titles and jubilees more than other countries and to be able to celebrate the Diamond wedding (being married for 60 years) is a central accomplishment, which receives much admiration. As a child, I desperately wanted to be part of this family tradition of being married for an exceptionally long time, which included finding the love of my life and starting a family of my own. Since in Austria marriage was – and still is – a right reserved for a man and a woman, and Civil Partnership did not exist back then, the realisation that I was more attracted to women was a turning point when it comes to imagining my future.

In spite of all this, I became disenchanted with love ever since my first relationship with a boy. At this point in my life, I had already longed for a relationship, since all my friends already had boyfriends. After our first kiss, though, there was no “wow-effect” and I also did not experience any desire for intimacy. Nevertheless, at 15 I did not yet know how kissing a woman would feel like. Admittedly, I felt sexually attracted to women, but I did not have any experience. Added to the struggle of coming out and accepting myself, was the emotionally intense reaction of my mother and my father's disbelief. Still, my sister provided me with literature and some friends supported me – not all of them, though. Some of my friends were not even surprised since I played football, dressed very boyish and had short hair. For me, however, there was hardly any connection, because I had only become sexually interested in other people when I was young, but I had already had problems with seeing myself as a girl when I started going to primary school. When I hit puberty, being a tomboy became harder and I started to feel uneasy in my own body and feared other people would judge me.

After finishing school, when I was in my first serious relationship with a woman, I began feeling more and more comfortable in my own skin, but I still could not wrap my head around being a woman, which is why I came out as trans\* when I was 20. As a matter of fact, I did not come out as a trans\* man, but as being neither man nor



woman. My friends and my former partner supported me very much – my best friend, above all, who is a trans\*man himself. When I was still in school, I had a crush on him and two years after he broke my heart, we became friends and I got to know him by a new name – his name. He then made me realise that I could not identify as a lesbian since I still thought he was hot and I had got rid somehow of my aversion to beards. He was also there for me when my partner broke up with me after 3,5 years. I thought she was the love of my life, and we would marry, raise kids and spend the rest of our lives together. With the end of our relationship, not only I had lost the most important person in my life but my dream and my idea of there being a one true love shattered. At that moment, however, I did not want to go back to my dream of a Golden Jubilee, I wanted to turn my ideas about love and relationships upside down. In this emotionally exhausting phase of my life, I began to question my ideas which were forced upon me by the institution of marriage, my family and Disney movies. What did I actually want? Where did I see myself when I did not think about societal expectations? This was where a new and different thought took shape, namely the utopian thought of a shared-living project with all the people I love, no matter if in a romantic or platonic way and where we could all raise kids together. But why should not this be possible?

I try to let every interpersonal relationship develop however it feels right for the people involved, without establishing beforehand how different kinds of relationships are supposed to work – for example, the idea that friendships always have to be purely platonic in order to work. Of course, it can be hard and exhausting to develop and redefine your own framework for relationships, but I would not want it any other way.

According to this new mindset, my dream of my one true love developed into a reality of having two people I love and being part of some kind of triad... well, it is still a work in progress ;)

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