

Tessa: A Teenage Tragedy

By

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INT. A HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

TESSA, a typical seventeen-year-old, is walking down a crowded high school hallway. She is conventionally attractive and wears dark rimmed glasses and Converse sneakers. There is nothing visibly interesting about her. She looks both bored and annoyed.

NARRATOR (VO)

This is Tessa Miller. She is a senior at Saunders High School and she is totally and terribly misunderstood.

Tessa walks up to her locker and opens it. As she switches out one notebook for another, a CHEERLEADER approaches her.

NARRATOR (VO)

Tessa is relentlessly judged and mocked by her more popular classmates.

CHEERLEADER

Hey, Tessa! I love that sweater! Where'd you get it?

NARRATOR (VO)

Tessa found this particular sweater a local thrift store. The cheerleader wouldn't understand

TESSA

Fuck off.

The cheerleader laughs.

CHEERLEADER

You're so funny! See you at the pep rally!

The cheerleader bounces away. Tessa closes her locker and sighs.

NARRATOR (VO)

High school is hell.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

Tessa sits in the back row of her math class taking a test. An attractive GUY is in the seat next to her. He keeps looking at her and it's obvious that he likes her.

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NARRATOR (VO)
Being the only intelligent person
in school is agonizing.

Tessa glares at the guy and covers her paper with her arm.

NARRATOR (VO)
Idiots are always trying to copy
Tessa's test answers.

GUY
Will you go out with me, Tessa?

TESSA
Fuck off.

The bell rings.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Tessa goes through the lunch line getting food.

NARRATOR (VO)
The truth is that no normal guy
could ever be interested in Tessa
because she doesn't look like a
normal girl. Tessa is beautiful, of
course, but in a highly
unconventional way because she
wears glasses. Guys don't
understand her.

Tessa exits the lunch line and starts walking through the
cafeteria.

NARRATOR (VO)
Nobody understands her.

Tessa walks past a table of football players. The
QUARTERBACK smiles and waves at her.

QUARTERBACK
Hey, Tessa! Come sit with us!

The rest of the football team smiles and waves at her. Tessa
rolls her eyes and keeps walking.

NARRATOR (VO)
You see, Tessa enjoys intellectual
pursuits, such as reading. Her
favorite author is JD Salinger.

Tessa walks past the theater table. One actress turns to her
and smiles.

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ACTRESS

Tessa! Hi! Have you bought a ticket for the spring musical yet?

Tessa's look of annoyance intensifies. She walks faster to avoid talking to the actress.

NARRATOR (VO)

Tessa doesn't watch movies. She watches *films* and only independent ones.

Tessa is stopped in her path by a SECOND GUY who is holding balloons and a teddy bear.

SECOND GUY

Will you go to prom with me, Tessa?

TESSA

Fuck off.

Tessa pushes past him and makes her way to the only empty table in the cafeteria. She takes a seat and starts to eat her food.

NARRATOR (VO)

Tessa listens to music that you probably don't and she listens to it on vinyl.

A group of students walks by her table. ONE OF THEM drops a party invitation on her desk.

ONE OF THEM

Hey, Tessa! My birthday's this weekend and I'm having a party. Hope you can make it!

The group moves on. Tessa stares morosely into the distance.

NARRATOR (VO)

Yes, Tessa is vastly different from her classmates in every possible way. It's hard to fit in with your peers when you have no peers.

The STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT walks to the front of the cafeteria with a microphone.

PRESIDENT

Attention! Can I have you attention for just a minute?

A hush falls over the crowd.

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PRESIDENT

Hey there, Saunders Spartans! Sorry to disrupt your lunch, but the votes for prom court have been tallied and as student body president, I have the privilege of announcing the results!

The students start murmuring, but the PRESIDENT shushes them.

PRESIDENT

Okay! Our first prom princess is...TESSA MILLER!

The cheering drowns out the other nominations. Students rush to Tessa's table to congratulate her.

STUDENT

Congratulations, Tessa!

ANOTHER STUDENT

I totally voted for you!

A THIRD STUDENT

You'll win for sure, Tessa!

All the words of encouragement blend together. Tessa sits in her chair, arms folded, brewing with anger.

NARRATOR (VO)

A cruel prank, and for the second year in the row. Teenagers can be so cruel and Tessa never seems to catch a break.

Tessa sits silently for a few moments before finally exploding.

TESSA

Fuck off!

The students laugh.

A HIGH SCHOOL GYM - NIGHT

Prom night. Upbeat pop music is blaring from the speakers and the floor is packed with dancing students. Everyone looks like they're having fun, except for Tessa. She is standing in the corner with her signature bored-annoyed expression.

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NARRATOR (VO)

The wretched prom has arrived.
Tessa is in attendance, of course,
but only to let everyone know how
lame she thinks it is.

Tessa scans the sea of students with the most hateful
expression.

NARRATOR (VO)

The world is cruel and unforgiving
place.

A male PROM-GOER dances over to Tessa.

PROM-GOER

(yelling over the music)
Hey, Tessa! Wanna dance?

Tessa scoffs.

TESSA

Fuck off!

The prom-goer laughs.

PROM-GOER

Okay! Maybe later then!

He dances off. Tessa looks like she wants to die.

The student body president steps onto the stage at the front
of the gym. She approaches the mic stand and taps of the
microphone. The music dies down and the students stop
dancing and turn towards the stage.

PRESIDENT

Hey, Spartans! You guys enjoying
prom?

The crowd cheers.

PRESIDENT

Yeah! Well, the time has arrived to
announce this year's Prom King and
Queen! We'll announce the queen
first, as per protocol. Drum roll
please.

There's a drum roll.

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PRESIDENT

Receiving an unprecedented
ninety-eight percent of the votes,
this year's prom queen is...TESSA
MILLER!

Tessa's face turns grey and as a deafening applause erupts.
A crowd of stronger students swarm around her. They lift her
up and carry her towards the stage. She tries to kick at
them in protest. They laugh.

NARRATOR (VO)

Oh, the degradation. Tessa
should've never even come to this
stupid prom full of stupid people.
Tessa should be at home with a cup
of tea and a copy of Allen
Ginsberg's *Howl*.

They deliver her to the stage with the help of the
president. The president shakes Tessa's hand. Tessa scowls
and wipes her hand on her dress. The students start chanting
in unison.

STUDENTS

Speech! Speech! Speech! Speech!

The president laughs.

PRESIDENT

Well, the masses have spoken. Get
over here and address your public,
Tessa!

Tessa approaches the microphone and scans the audience.

NARRATOR (VO)

As Tessa looks out at a crowd full
of people, people who will never
understand her, she can only think
of one thing she wants to say to
them.

Tessa opens her mouth to speak.

:TO BLACK