

First Kiss

by Garglestone

And on the way home this spin-the-bottle variant began down the back of the bus, in which
the kissee was blindfolded and invited to guess the identity of the kisser
(an inert bit of gamification, since guessing rightly or wrongly entailed no consequence)
and Tom and I weren't playing because we both had girlfriends in another school
so we sat together at the front of the bus, reading

Edgar Allan Poe

and

FourFourTwo

respectively

and the turn came of Hannah Flynn to be kissed, a person describable in the cruel hierarchical
terminology of the schoolyard as

a nerd

and the bottle elected pig-ignorant Barry McNock

a jock

to be her kisser—

and a commotion began

—a complex dumb-show in which McNock mimed retching, and waved his hand

dismissively, to signal his

unwillingness

to kiss

while Hannah's friends made frantic, threatening gestures

and poor Hannah sat there blindfolded, as the silence accumulated significance, surely

guessing what was happening, surely feeling sick to her stomach

and the sudden intensification of the atmosphere drew the attention of the rest of the bus

so that we all looked on in horror

as though paralysed

until Tom handed me his book and walked silently down the aisle, and knelt by Hannah's
seat,
and kissed her, and then marched back up the aisle and resumed his seat, transformed,
while Hannah laughed
in triumph or despair
and broke the rules
by guessing
Edgar
Allan
Poe
—for there was no one in our class who bore that name.

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Author bio: Garglestone is a tall glass of water. He lives in Greece with his wife and daughter. His recent fiction has appeared in Flash Fiction Magazine and Northern Gravy.