

ANTONIA

Dear Mrs. Post--

Gil is different from most boys. *Special*. Even though he's not treated special, particularly by Danny. Gil has already asked me to the school dance twice, but I had to say *no* because my uncle would never let me see a boy unsupervised--

I really like Gil. But I'm afraid if I say *no* again, he'll look for a girl who will say *yes*. So what am I to do--?

No matter what, I know I should adore my uncle, Mrs. Post.

But--

I--

(Antonia pushes through with a smile.)

In any case. Other than this:

Boy,

my life is just--

Swell.

Yours truly:

Tormented Teen--

From North Orange, New Jersey.

ANTONIA

That's why I've been living with Uncle for the nearly two years. My mother committed suicide. Then my brothers were killed in the Korean War. So it was just my father and me. Then he started to go blind. He told me he was cursed, but I didn't believe him. When he completely lost his sight, he died. They're all dead. I've never said that out loud before.

Sometimes...I get this dark feeling. It starts in my chest and spreads out into my entire body. And then I become darkness. I'm afraid that one day I'm going to wake up and be darkness for the rest of my life.

ANTONIA

(closes eyes)

I didn't tell Maddy the entire truth about Gil and now she's supervising my date because Uncle would *never* let me go with him because...Gil is black. I know Gil and I being together is against the law in a lot of states, but it's not illegal in New Jersey, so I wouldn't be committing a crime if I did go to the dance with him.

(opens eyes) Do you think it's unnatural for me to be with Gil?

I honestly don't understand why people believe it's unnatural to be with another person who isn't the same color. It's so limiting. But I imagine Maddy would immediately tell Uncle about Gil because she'd think she'd be saving me in some way. Uncle would definitely have a fit and he'd probably...

So I have to cancel tomorrow night, right?

What I do here, in this narrow-minded place, will not change the course of the future. What this date will do is get me into trouble and Gil into even worse trouble. And it will certainly upset a lot of people in North Orange, including Mrs. Bruno and Mrs. Grundy who can't help themselves from exaggerating certain details. My date might even cause a *riot*. Which means maybe you'll get hurt and I don't want to do anything that would hurt you--

But I can't help it. I worry about so many things.

ANTONIA

I did it! I went to the dance with Gil. And despite my current unfortunate circumstance, being with Gil was worth it and so much more. Last night was *magical*.

What's different about Gil from most boys, especially Danny, is that he has a plan to change the world. He's taking a bus to New Orleans where he's going to sit-in at segregated establishments until they serve him. Mrs. Post, I believe you would agree with me that people who don't serve other people because of the color their skin have no sense of etiquette. But back to the dance. As we swayed to the music, Gil told me his plan and I had the most mature thought. I thought, *How brave*. I thought, *I want to be brave like Gil--!*

It's done! I've made my decision. I'm leaving Uncle and North

Orange and going with Gil. It's exciting and scary, but this is something I have to do--

I am in *LOVE* and I don't care what anybody says--!