

Expectations

I shove my way through the crowded hallway to my locker. It's the fourteenth of February, a scribbled out date on my graffitied agenda, and all I want is to sleep. I space out thinking about my warm, cozy cocoon of blankets and a shiver runs down my slightly bony spine. But I don't shiver from the cold dreary morning.

I loathe Valentine's Day. The thought of bubbly cheery couples causes emptiness in my gut. The one day of the year people can obnoxiously show their affection in public. It just reminds me of something that I don't have and have never had. I'll admit I'm jealous and I know it's ridiculous.

I turn the corner and my light mousy hair falls in my face. I spot one of the most popular boys in my school, surrounded by eight drooling puppy dog girls. That boy used to be my best friend in elementary school. I gave him a valentine every year, though everyone gave everyone's valentines then. It simply meant friendship, yet now it means so much more. The simple threads of friendship are woven into complicated relationships.

I look away and gloomily, keep walking. There are perfect, cute, idealistic relationships. My favorite movie, *Juno*, is like my bible to teen relationships. Michael Cera plays the perfect guy. I mean, hey, getting pregnant at sixteen doesn't look so bad with him around. I laugh quietly to myself, thinking about how ridiculous that is.

This is reality though. I don't give anything and I don't expect anything. I just need to get through the day with "Loose Lips" or "Anyone Else But You" in my head. Kimya Dawson's music is my constant guide and distraction. I unconsciously clutch my iPod in my coat pocket.

I reach my beat-up locker and stare at it with a dull expression. The tiniest spark of hope flares in my gut, but within a moment is extinguished as I silently curse myself for such a painful and foolish hope. As I exhale sigh, I turn the lock and it cheerily clicks open. I shuffle around my books and papers and a neat little pink envelope slips to my feet. A slight smile stretches across my face and I kneel down to pick up the treasure.

Happy Valentine's Day.

- Shannon Worton