

# Unrequited Love

Comedian Sara Benincasa dreams about the ones who got away.

I've fallen in love a number of times, but only a few of the manly objects of my affection have had the wisdom to also fall in love with me. Whenever the season of little candy hearts and paper valentines rolls around, I like to curl up with a cup of hot cocoa and flip through my old diaries, reminiscing about the ones who somehow, despite my best threats and intimidation tactics, got away.

**Kyle.** Kyle was the most beautiful boy in Mrs. Corcoran's third-grade class. He had a head of brown hair that his mother sculpted into carefully moussed peaks. His bangs looked like one of those rows of scary security spikes that guard airport car rental exits. His hair was only slightly less magnificent than his face, which had a smattering of brown freckles, or his mouth, which boasted a few handsome gaps where his baby teeth had been. I thought he was the most gorgeous creature on earth, and I expressed my love for him by repeatedly kicking him in the shins at recess. Kyle somehow misinterpreted my display of devotion as hostile aggression and spent most of his recess time hanging out with the dainty little pee wee football cheerleaders, who did effortless back handsprings and never tried to beat him up. What a fool he was, that Kyle. Our love could have been the stuff of great novels, which could then become mediocre big-budget films. But alas, Kyle moved to North Carolina before the end of the school year, and our true potential was never realized.

**Joey.** Joey was a kid with a Jersey accent so thick that I never was sure whether he was actually speaking English or some undiscovered native language of the greater Newark area. I'm a Jersey girl through and through, but Joey spoke lightening-fast and used a lot of slang I didn't understand. A simple "How are you?" became "EyYoHowYaDoinOvahDeahYouGoodOrWha?" Since 15-year-old boys generally communicate in grunts anyway, I wasn't worried. I knew that Joey and I had a love that went beyond words. I'd write him cute little notes full of hearts and stars and questions about football practice, and he'd respond by scrawling, "YO, DOES JENNIFER HAVE A BOYFRIEND?" on the back of his math test and chucking it at me. It was just his way of being coy, feigning interest in my best friend to discover what my true feelings were for him. I understood the tactic and humored him, until he asked Jennifer to the ninth-grade

dance instead of me. I called him up in tears and yelled, "I'll never forgive you for this!" To which he responded, "YoYouTinkJennifaLikesRosesOrDaisiesBeta?" He and Jennifer are married now. I know because I looked him up on Facebook.

**Andrew.** Oh, Andrew. You never forget the one you loved in college, particularly when he's also in jail doing 10 to 15 for armed robbery at a local zoo. That's right. Turns out that when he wasn't rocking out onstage with his super-awesome punk band or handsomely pouting in poetry class like that hot vampire from *Twilight*, Andrew was plotting the heist of a gift shop at a New England zoo. His cousin, a security guard there, was the accomplice. As my friends and I watched Andrew and his cousin in handcuffs on the news, I felt a strange stab of pride at the utter weirdness

of his crime. Andrew was a rebel, and he didn't rob just any old bank or convenience store, like your average criminal. He followed his own path, walked to the beat of his own drummer. He even looked like James Dean, albeit with a mullet and a really ugly arm tattoo of his ex-high school girlfriend. And to think, I never even got to tell him I loved him before they threw him in the slammer.

There were other guys, too: tall ones and short ones, fat ones and thin ones, ones with lots of money and ones without two pennies to rub together. In my memory, they are a vast and diverse group of guys with one main burden to carry: the knowledge that they could have been with me, but chose to focus on other stuff—Kyle on the cheerleaders, Joey on Jennifer and Andrew on the petty cash drawer at a gift shop that sold stuffed raccoons and "I Love New England Wildlife" T-shirts. I had enormous crushes on each of them, and not one of them gave me a second look.

As I look longingly to the future, I think about the man who will ultimately be smart enough to give me his heart. I can't see my destiny, but I know one thing for sure: This February, my local coffee shop has an amazing ginger cocoa, and the new barista is the hottest guy I've ever seen. So I must now take leave, gentle reader. I've got to address certain matters of the heart.

*Sara Benincasa is a comedian, Sirius XM talk show host and former teacher. Her one-woman show, Agorafabulous, is featured at the 2010 SF Sketchfest comedy festival in San Francisco, ending February 2.*



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