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Ms. Ann Sullivan

Sandbox 101

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I Believe in Being Single (-ish)

They say a man who has some money is apparently in need of a wife. I think I read that somewhere. What does that mean for the poor ones? Does poverty mean that he is any less attractive, or funny, or smart, or manly? In the female eye, apparently, the answer is yes. If you are an attractive female and you disagree with that statement, feel free to ask for my number. Even so, I’ve never been afflicted with the lack of any of that: money, looks, wits, the whole shebang. Though there are times I wish I did. I’ve always liked girls for as long as I can remember. When my friends as children all pulled on annoying girl’s pig-tails I joined in, all the while secretly loving the feel and the fragrance of their hair. I’m just naturally drawn to anything with a ball, running, or weights. It’s not my fault that my dad put me on a football team when I was a kid, and it’s not my fault my mom taught me how to think. Because of all these things, I had my first serious girlfriend in the 6th grade, and I haven’t been single since that day. That is until recently. That’s when I began to believe in being single.

            Two months ago I got home from my mission in South America. Molly was my girlfriend all through high school and when I got my mission call, she was right there beside me. During my mission, we wrote about wedding plans, and I bragged to my district about the girl who wouldn’t never ever ‘dear John’ me. When I ran off the plane my first plan was to hug my parents and family and then ask them for a loan for a ring. We returned to school together and I came over whenever I could. After being away from school for two years, I not only had to remember English but how to study. Maybe it was my own fault because I spent so much time working and studying that she never told me about the boys she had been dating here at school while I was gone. She never told me about Fred Wickham. A few days after being here, she sat me down and told me that she didn’t love me anymore, that I had changed. I should hope so, I told her. We talked all night but it wouldn’t work. The only bitter thought I had was that now I could use that loan for my textbooks instead of the ring. Two weeks later, she was engaged to Fred Wickham. Turns out they had been seeing each other for over a year and she just never wanted to distract me from the mission. I wished I had gotten that ‘Dear John,’ after all. I could only think of her, and all other girls just were too busy to answer my texts. For the first time since puberty, I was single. Instead of studying, I took long lonely walks. I had all these words that I wanted to tell Molly and all these phrases came bubbling up like a prehistoric mud pit that had always been there under the surface, trapping memories and exes. I wrote a letter to her and threw it away. Meanwhile, my roommate needed some scratch paper, so he took it from the garbage and found it full of feelings. He returned it to my desk and coaxed me through editing against my will. Then I wrote some more and my pages grew more whitespaces and heavier in less ink. Then it wasn’t even about Molly anymore. It came pouring out until the day that I said it out loud to my dad. “Dad, I think I’m…

a poet.”

            It was a struggle for my dad to accept it, and my mother loved me through the whole process saying that somehow she had known it all along. But I have found new purpose in my life. I’m starting to understand parts of me that I never have before. For once, I see me without someone else and it feels just fine. I’m single, and I write poetry, and I play basketball ( and every other sport) still. I’m still good-looking, and I’m not poor, and I think I’m funnier than I used to be. But I’m single. I have to thank Molly for saying goodbye. Because for the first time in my life, I truly and fully believe in being single. It has brought out parts of me that were dead and the atonement of being without romance has brought them back. I’m more me than I ever was with anyone else. I believe in being single… but I wouldn’t turn down a cute date.