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Loose Love

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Cleopatra | Marcella Axelrad | Photograph

loose love

kelsie davis

I fall in love all the time. Trust me. I'm a professional. Probably just about every single week I fall in love with somebody new. These aren't real romances. They're barely even imaginary romances. It's really more of an intellectual and emotional exercise in how attached I can get to things that I'll never have, and then how quickly I can move on from them.

When I was six years old I fell in love with a kid named Jimmy. He was really good friends with my older brother. I was smitten with him all the way up until he shoved me down the playground steps

during a game of tag and I somersaulted over myself and landed on my head. He came to see if I was okay, which was very noble of him, but it didn't matter because I decided then and there that I never wanted to see him again. Poof, game over.

The next time I fell in love, it was a doozey. Dark hair, dark eyes, and the nicest boy I'd ever met. Again, he was good friends with my older brother... there might have been a trend there. His mom would watch my brothers and me when my parents went out or had to stay late at church, and I got along really well

with her. I was strategizing from a young age. For this love story, there was no falling out. I think I may still be in love with him – but in a “that was a long time ago and I haven’t seen him since I was eight” kind of way. Still, he’ll always have a little piece of my heart, way off in the corner.

After him I took a bit of a break. The next time I fell in love, I was thirteen. Oh yeah, this was the big leagues. Teenagers. Texting. Hugging. Hanging out. Talk about a recipe for some young heartbreak. He won my heart when he told me he thought I was “cute.” Coincidentally, I also thought he was cute. So that’s pretty much all that was necessary for a relationship to bloom. It lasted three months until I got bored because we were thirteen and there are only so many times you can have the same conversation while texting.

After that one I got a little pickier over who I fell in love with. There were boys, there were interests, but there was a lot less capturing-of-my-heart. Boys were teenagers and obnoxious and loud. They mostly just annoyed me.

I fell in love with a guy who was a freshman mentor. Yep. I was a freshman. That’s really all I want to say about that one.

My freshman year of college I fell in love for 2 weeks. Tall, cute, and easy to talk to. He brought me a chocolate frosty and told me about his family. The expectations were slowly rising. At this point in my young life I had never held hands with a boy, kissed a boy, or anything remotely resembling physical affection. After 2 weeks of being in love with him he tried to put his arm around me and just like with Jimmy, poof, all affections were gone. I’m not sure what the science was behind that poof. All I knew was one minute it was there, and then the moment he tried to touch me, it was not. That was a pretty clear sign. Love = demolished.

And then there was this really moody guy who took photos and was super artsy. He was one of those brooding guys who just seemed so complex and deep. I

never had a conversation with him. Not once. Just from afar, I thought maybe we’d travel the world together. The complete dream.

Then I met this one guy who really intrigued me. He was so upbeat. I remember the first time I saw him, I just kept looking at him. In a room full of people who looked very uncomfortable, he was laughing and just leaking joy. I remember he made me smile and he wasn’t even talking to me. He was the first guy that interested me – not just in his looks or even his personality, but in how he was. Vibrant. Kind. Genuine.

The next love story came in a very real and very intense kind of way. My first relationship. Quirky. A little dorky. Kind. Funny. Interesting. He was the first guy who I thought might be into me too and held my attention long enough to even allow for possibilities. I kept waiting for it to fall through – a week, two weeks, a month, until finally I realized that maybe it wasn’t going to fall through. It did. A year and a half later. Oof. That was a bad one. All the pain and heartache that comes from walking away from something safe and sure. But it wasn’t the right one. I had more falling in love to do.

After that I fell in love with a friend. This was my fantastical love. My “never-gonna-happen” love. My “wouldn’t-it-be-nice-if-it-did” love. My “don’t-push-it-farther-than-friendship” love. And I didn’t. But man, did we fall in love in my head. The whole kit and kaboodle. We’d joke around, or have long conversations, or wave to each other from across campus and I’d think, “you better knock it off, don’t you know I’m in love with you?” But I knew deep down that there was no chance. Not happening. Never a possibility.

Next I fell in love with the guy who sat directly across from me in church. I caught him looking at me, too. It was a fun mental romance; one with just enough encouragement to be entertaining. He’d come over and talk to me, and I’d flirt with him in a friendly way. I think we only had a total of 10 conversations all summer long. It all came to a halt when I asked

if he wanted to get coffee and he said he wasn’t ready for a relationship. I, shocked from the jump that was made to that conclusion, told him I also didn’t want a relationship, to which he wasn’t quite sure how to respond. I left to go back to school a week later. No harm, no foul. I couldn’t even tell you his last name.

I got back to school and fell in love with a guy I adored being around. He made me laugh, he could hold a conversation with me, and he wanted to spend time with me. I couldn’t shake it. He was my “what if?” love; my “I’d pick you in a heartbeat” love. First of all, he brought me food, so just from that, I’m sold. He got along with my friends, he sat in Denny’s with me talking about life and our interests until three o’clock in the morning. He was my friend. I trusted him.

It seemed like that was all my love stories were – grabbing on and letting go over and over again. I was always curious but not interested. Engaged but not invested. Hold, release. Cling, set loose. Hello, goodbye. And then I never held onto them again. So imagine my surprise when I kept falling in love with the same person. I found myself circling around and around to the same guy – remember him? I’ve introduced him a few times. The guy who leaked joy, who was later the guy I thought was never going to happen, who was later the guy I trusted.

I didn’t expect him to keep coming around. So when he showed up one night to ask me out on a date, I realized that the right love doesn’t disappear when you let go. When I tried to let go, it came back, little by little. Or more likely, it just stuck around. It gathered up all the loose love that was spread around and tied it together in a bow, put the bow on a bag of my favorite candy, and showed up at my doorstep.