

THE CLASS RING

by Chris Moore

If a boy and girl liked each other back in the late fifties and early sixties, the boy would give the girl his class ring. In junior high school this was rather difficult because no boy had a class ring--this privilege was reserved for high school when the boy purchased one. That wouldn't stop the junior high boys. They would "borrow" one from their older brothers or high school friends. The boy would then give this ring to his girlfriend. Girls would be so excited to receive the ring, regardless of where it came from, because that meant she could wrap the ring with angora yarn.

Angora was a fuzzy yarn that came in all colors. The ring was wrapped because it would be too big for the girl's finger and this was one way she could make it fit. Girls carried a tooth brush with them at all times so the yarn holding the ring could be brushed into a big furry ball. Yarn colors were changed daily or even hourly to match the girls' outfits or moods. How I envied all of those girls with the big balls of fluff on their fingers and their toothbrushes. I would watch the ritual of wrapping, adjusting, and combing with such awe that I was overcome with the need to have one.

One day at lunch, a boy came up to me and asked if I knew who Tom was. I said, "I think so." The boy then returned the reply, "He likes you!" I thought to myself, "So!" The boy then proceeded to walk away. A vision of a ring with fluff appeared before my eyes. I called out, "Wait!" He stopped and faced me. "Does he have a ring?" I asked.

"I'll check," he said. A few minutes later he returned and said Tom had a ring. I was overjoyed! I told the boy that I liked Tom, too! The boy went running back to Tom. Words were exchanged and Tom gave the boy something. The boy came running to me and presented me with the all-important ring.

My best friend was a silent observer to this scenario and asked, "Do you have a tooth brush and angora?" I said, "No!" We spent the next few minutes rounding up a spare toothbrush and some angora--there was always plenty to be found! I wrapped the prize in the ritual that I had seen so many girls before me perform. I combed the ring lovingly, fluffing the angora to a puffy ball.

My revelry was interrupted by, "Ahem." I looked up and there was Tom smiling at me. I looked down at the ring, up at Tom, down at the ring. At that moment, I realized that Tom came with the ring! I didn't want that! I wasn't ready to be with just one boy. I wasn't even certain about my relationship with boys or how I should act around boys! I sadly unwrapped the ring and gave it back to Tom. He walked away confused and sad. I walked away confused. This was the first time I had considered the commitment that a class ring made.

Name _____ Period _____ Date _____

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Directions: Answer the following questions.

1. What did the ring represent in relationships?
2. Do you think there is pressure to pair in school? Why? or Why not?
3. Was the girl in the story ready to pair? How could you tell?
4. Are all teens ready to pair at the same time? Why?
5. What might a girl say to a guy who wants her to "go out" with him, but she doesn't want to make that commitment?
6. Should pressure be placed on someone who is not ready to go with just one person? Why?
7. What are some verbal or nonverbal clues that a person may not be ready to commit to a relationship?