

February Is the Worst

By Stella Reneke

The best thing about BuzzFeed quizzes is my GPA. It is literally impossible to fail--especially in February. "Can You Recognize the First Scene of All Twenty of These Famous Rom-Coms?" Please, give me a *real* challenge. That 4.0 is still going strong.

The worst thing about BuzzFeed quizzes, though, is that sometimes they have the nerve to be accurate. Incredibly rude--especially in February. Some examples:

- "Your Choice of Muffins Will Reveal Your Greatest Desire": apparently a pension for blueberry and lemon poppy seed baked goods just thinly veils a deep yearning for true love. A butter knife through the gut.
- "Are You Having a Valentine's Day or a Galentine's Day?": well I just accepted an invitation to an event titled "Let's order pizza and watch *Pride and Prejudice*", so you tell me. Thanks for throwing the pie in my face.
- And the icing on the aggressively pink and heart-shaped cake: "Which Jane Austen Heroine Matches Your Personality?": if I'm the modern reincarnation of Elizabeth Bennet, where is my Mr. Darcy? Or have I already met him and currently hate him? Which would be worse?

Now, all things considered, I'm not a cynic. Nor do I genuinely take to heart the results of silly online personality quizzes (at least not after the time I got sorted into Hufflepuff *and* labelled a cat person in the same afternoon). But that doesn't mean I don't sometimes want to grate my own heart over every shared plate of spaghetti and meatballs at every romantic candlelit dinner-for-two within a 50-mile radius of my apartment. Especially in god-forsaken February.

There is simply no reason for Valentine's-Day-themed everything from January 2nd until February 15th. Like any self-respecting capitalist, I get the marketing approach. Starbucks rotates in the appropriate cookie cutter for the season, and now they sell more overpriced desserts to all the boyfriends who managed to forget the most easily spotted mile-marker in their relationships. But like any self-respecting perpetually single person, I dream of the day when the heart-shaped chocolates go on sale, the cupids are replaced with mildly racist leprechauns, and the department stores change their color schemes from pink to green. I'd rather feel culturally appropriated as an Irish person than called out at every turn as a single person.

Right about now, I should be concentrating on any number of more immediately critical things than the barren state of my love life. As a college student, it's midterm season. I've got two papers, two exams, and an audio-video project to complete in the next week alone. As an employed citizen of the United States, it's tax season. Our public high schools don't believe in teaching personal finance to kids *before* they get real jobs, so now I've got to find time to teach myself how not to commit federal tax evasion out of sheer ignorance. As a regular human who prefers not to shine a spotlight on every empty corner of her life at every moment of every day, it's bury-my-head-in-The-Notebook-and-don't-come-out-until-it's-all-over season.

The same technology that brought us BuzzFeed has brought us an overpopulated world being smushed into a tighter community every day by the internet and social media. We are all frantic to find the one person on the planet who is "the one". Twenty years ago, I would only have had to sort through the hundreds of millions of people in my country. Today, I feel compelled to sort through the 7.6 billion people on the entire planet. Today, it's possible to make a love connection on the other side of the world, but looking through that open door is

overwhelming. Sometimes it's a relief to take a BuzzFeed quiz that tells you when you'll meet your soulmate based on how you take your coffee--but trivializing love only gets you so far. It's better just to put it all in context, and remember that a romantic partnership is not the only thing of import in your life, nor even the only way to have love.

If BuzzFeed has told me anything this month (other than that I won't meet my soulmate until June of 2019), it's that the only relationship status worth bemoaning is the one you have with yourself. February is miserable when you're single, no doubt about it. But if you remember the other sources of love in your world and find the balance between holding your head up and not taking yourself too seriously, you'll pull through. And in the meantime, go study for your midterms. I hear BuzzFeed GPAs don't get you into grad school.