

A delicate cubic zirconia's heart bursting with sparkles lies at the bottom of my jewelry box useless. Over the years its chain has accumulated knots in many sections, and now it would be impossible to straighten out. There is a memory that goes with it from my teenage years that I will not let go that links it all together.

It was in my freshman year in high school that I had an admirer, but I was oblivious for a long time until he started to become much more aggressive in his pursuit.

One day the admirer came to me with a box wrapped expertly topped with an elaborate bow. I immediately knew that it was a gift from the local jewelry store in town because that was their signature wrapping paper. The gift was a birthday present, but I told him that I couldn't accept it. I felt uncomfortable and handed it back to him unopened.

After that, I started taking more notice of him, but I really wasn't interested in him. I didn't think that we had much in common, and besides I was involved in my own friendships.

The admirer made several more awkward attempts at offering me this present, until he appeared in my yard one afternoon and begged me to take the gift no matter what I felt about him. Having little experience with boy-girl relationships at fourteen, I didn't know the right words to say, and somehow the box ended up being thrown at me before he stalked off.

My mother had been watching from the dining room window, and told me in no uncertain terms that I had to give it back. She explained why. It shouldn't surprise anyone that I never got around to returning it, and tried to let the whole incident die. The necklace sat in my jewelry box for a long time before I chose to wear it. It didn't feel right though, as there was a memory with it that was tarnished.