

## DYING LOVE

Tanya Senne  
Social Work  
Valparaiso High School, Valparaiso, IN

[Assignment: Write an essay examining the causes and effects of a difficult or complex experience.]

We sometimes feel grave pain in relationships with members of the opposite sex. In these relationships you feel you really love the other person, yet almost everything you do for them is taken for granted. It doesn't feel as though the love you've been pouring out is ever being returned. The pain and sorrow you feel is very deep. You feel like you're doing something wrong or that everything is your fault. It's not; you've fallen victim to a one-sided relationship.

I remember when I first met Ted. He was a nice, caring, and sincere young man. We met in government class our senior year. Quick to become friends, Ted and I were seen everywhere together. We were very open with each other about our feelings and began to involve ourselves in a more serious relationship. After Ted and I had been together for about three months we decided to "go steady" as it is often called. We now held hands in public and sometimes kissed in the hallways between classes. Ted even moved his books into my locker so that we could see each other every time we weren't in class.

I was on the swim team at the time so many of my nights were spent at swim meets. At every one of them during the diving section I'd leave to call Ted on the phone. Ted became the center of my life; everything revolved around him. It was because of this that all of my friends stopped hanging around me. But it didn't matter--I had Ted.

By the time we were to graduate from high school Ted and I had begun to plan our lives together. Ted was planning to join the Air Force for two years, hoping to become a military police officer. After his six weeks basic training, he planned to return home so that we could get married. We planned to go back to the base together, which seemed like a good plan at the time. It wasn't until Ted found out that he could not return between his time at basic training and technical school that he changed his mind. This again left us as two teenagers, just out of high school, who were unable to get married like we wanted to.

After Ted made his decision, he began to look for jobs. I helped him explore various employment opportunities, driving him around to put in application after application. About two weeks later he got a job at the local Subway restaurant, working closing shifts. I fully trusted Ted and did not object to his job, at least, until he met Jenny, with whom he spent the rest of the summer. As hurt as I was, I remained faithful to Ted. Shortly after he got involved with Jenny, she began hanging around his place of work. This eventually got him fired.

When Ted was fired he began to think that Jenny wasn't such a good influence after all. We began to get closer again, going fishing and taking

walks in the park. Every night I would go home and look in the paper to see if there were any jobs Ted might like to have. One night I noticed an ad for a job in a bait shop, not too far from where he lived. The next morning I called Ted first thing to tell him about the job. He quickly took down the information and gave them a call. Within five minutes he called me back to tell me he got the job and was starting the next day.

Shortly after he got the job he found a car he just had to have. Unfortunately, he did not have enough money to pay for it and asked me to chip in. I paid for over half of that car, but this was only part of the deal. He did not have an operator's license. This meant that the car had to be put under my name, and I was to drive him to work every morning. I really didn't mind; after all, I'd get to spend more time with Ted this way.

A few months down the road, Ted's boss told him that the apartment attached to the store was for rent and he was wondering if Ted would like to rent it. Ted had been looking for a way to move out of his house, and so he agreed. A few days later Ted and his friend Joe moved in. I was out there every day cleaning the house. After the first few days, however, things got more difficult, because that's when the parties started. People came from all over to sit around and drink and smoke marijuana. I watched from my corner, where I sat by myself, as Ted participated with his friends. Night after night people would come. Every morning, while Ted and Joe were passed out on the couch, I would come out to clean up the mess of the night before. About three months later, after his boss had received many complaints about Ted's failure to open the store on time and about the smell of marijuana, Ted was fired.

Again I began searching for a job for Ted. Four months later, in April, I found a job for him about twenty miles away doing maintenance at an apartment complex. He got the job and moved into one of the apartments there. I will never forget the day Ted left our town to go to his new apartment. Even though he promised he would always be with me, I felt as if he was slipping through my fingers. Ted called me every night, but it seemed he was a million miles away. Every weekend I would drive up to see Ted, yet it seemed that our time was so short.

After some time, because of the pain of being separated, Ted asked me to move in with him. Though I knew in the back of my head that I wasn't ready to take a step like this, I agreed so that we could be closer. When I moved in with him, things went really well at first. We'd take walks around the apartment complex at night, and we would sit and talk until the wee hours of the morning, just enjoying each other. After awhile, when money became scarce and Ted wasn't around as much, I began to get scared. A few weeks later, I ended up in the hospital for an exploratory outpatient surgery. I was diagnosed with colitis caused from an excessive amount of stress.

The whole next week I spent with my parents, trying to recover. Everyone was around me twenty-four hours a day, making sure I was all right. My mother even fed me when I was too sick to get out of bed. And though I kept waiting, Ted never came to see me.

It was two weeks after this that I moved back home into the loving arms of people who really cared about me. Ted taught me many painful lessons about life. Without knowing it, I fell head over heels in love with a guy who could not return this love. Though I cried over our separation, I have learned that even a life alone is better than this pain. I am now able to live my life as myself instead of being a person of Ted's making. It has been hard, but through the help of many friends and professionals, I am starting to work this through.