“You know, I have always loved you.”

These words, spoken to me by my best friend as she left for her wedding, left me without a response. What does one say to this, at this moment?

My thoughts step back for a moment. All my life I have been surrounded by the stories and expectations; that I would “know when it happened”, that I would find “the one”. But even when I had a girlfriend, I didn’t feel anything. What was it supposed to feel like? How am I supposed to know?

Since then, I’ve chased the emotion. Stacks of novels about couples litter my shelves and eReader. Hours and hours of TV shows watched. Research and conversations with friends.

For the sake of argument, I call myself asexual and aromantic. Seems to fit, but is it true? Is it that I just haven’t found “the one”? Could I have a mental illness that results in simply not being able to form connections with others?

Coming back to the present, why now? I want to ask, but I feel like it would be… wrong. But did I miss signs? Was there evidence, clues, suggestions made that I overlooked, that I didn’t understand? Is it because being aromantic means I don’t understand those signs, or am I simply an idiot? After all, with how much I hate myself, why would anyone like me…

Why bring this up now, right when it would stop mattering? Is it because it doesn’t matter anymore? Is there something she wants me to do? Am I feeling nothing but confusion because I don’t reciprocate, or because I can’t?

As I stand there, surrounded by questions, she walks away. A door that I had never known was open silently closes in front of me.