

On Being a Valentine

By Pete Clark

If I were a yet to be created Valentine, where and what would I be? Depending upon what type or quality Valentine my future self would be, I might be part of a cellulose growth ring in the trunk of an evergreen tree or a deciduous tree, providing soft wood pulp for the paper industry. If I am to be a stronger, fancier Valentine, that can handle a long, hand written, lovelorn or amorous epistle, then I should begin life as part of a growth ring in a hardwood tree such as a poplar or a birch, whose cellulose fibers are much longer, providing more strength and durability for the recording of intimate messages inspired by Aphrodite. If I were to be one of the finest Valentines to be produced my beginning would have been in a pile of rags for recycling or in a cotton boll, which, except for the seeds, is almost pure cellulose. Cotton is used to make the best grades of paper, which can be used for the most genteel Valentines and I may even have gold or silver foil as part of the artistry I present! I would be a Valentine sent to make a much greater statement than simple love.

When my artwork is complete and I am ready for printing, cutting, sorting and mating with an envelope, I will know what type of Valentine I will have become. Perhaps I will become a part of a die cut paper page of assorted small, inexpensive valentines created for the Grade School Crowd and suffer the humiliation of being covered with goo as sticky fingers press me out, write on me and stick me into a tiny envelope, hopefully addressed to someone who has clean fingers. What one must go through to please the young of the human animal! I might also be made of low quality card stock with garish colors and silly sentiments printed on me. A fate such as that would not be fair. It is my right to be better than either of these things!

I will be much happier should I become a nice Valentine Greeting Card printed on high quality paper card stock. My outer fold should carry the work of a talented artist, whose work will display the accouterments of love and desire. My inner fold should present a well thought out wish for the beginning of a warm relationship, or a declaration of eternal love, or somewhere in between. That a handsome envelope be provided for my enclosure goes without saying! Whether or not I am hand delivered, sent through the US Postal Service, or by FEDEX matters not a whit, as long as I arrive at the correct location in a timely manner.

I could be the epitome of the Valentine. I would be beautifully colored and present a sentiment embossed in gold, so I might be saved or sold for scrap and not go out with the trash.