

From Chemical Bonding

DANI, 18, is giving the salutatorian speech at her high school graduation.

DANI

Congratulations class of 2010! We have officially made it! Thirteen years, and for some of us, more, I'm talking to you Jacob, have culminated in this moment. I never thought I would be standing here today. When one thinks about education, one is often struck by how... I believe it was Plato who said "the unexamined life is not worth living."

(she looks out to the audience.)

That was Socrates? Socrates. Okay. To be fair, I didn't say it *was* Plato, I said I *believed* it was Plato, there's a difference. Well I am not a good comment on the American educational system apparently. Back to my speech.

(she looks down at her notecards again.)

I believe it was *Socrates* who said "the unexamined life is not worth living" and we have been examined a lot. From Standardized tests in fourth grade, to standardized tests in fifth grade, to that mile time trial we all had to do in sixth grade, to standardized tests in seventh grade... we have been examined. And what have we learned? Well...

(she looks down at her cards again.)

Actually I'm not going to read this. This speech is terrible. They made me write this in my communications class and it's awful. I just wanna talk to you, okay?

(pause. She tries to think of something to say.)

You ever do that? You ever think you've got something deep to say and then it turns out there's absolutely nothing in your brain? I just had that moment and I am beginning to freak out. Um... but... getting on with it. Graduation. Crap. Is anybody else out there like totally terrified? I know I shouldn't because I'm like salutatorian and all; I would have been valedictorian except for Mr. Jackson's long-term sub, but I'm not going to get into that. But it's like: part of me just wants to stay in homeroom forever, you know? And then part of me is like, no, you should burn everything to the ground and then spit on the ashes, you know? I'm not going to do that, Officer Weeks. I'm totally over that.

But um... we're done with high school. And we're moving on. Yeah.

(she stands there.)

So okay that wasn't better than what I had on the cards. Do I have time to do that over?

If you are interested in reading more of this play, please contact me at donzolidis@yahoo.com