

Getting Hit by a Bus

Anthony and I met in 7th grade, we had many classes with each other and I sat next to him in Math for a month. That year he was just any other person and the only opinion I had formed about him was that he was very tall. He as well only knew my name. We knew each other through mutual friends who were dating (Mark and Elise). Summer came and went, I flirted with many guys and cultivated my awkward tactics. I started the school year with a renowned confidence, my pixie cut that I had clung to for 2 years was now growing in to a very curly crop on my head, I was tan, and I knew how to work my way through school. It just so happened that Anthony and I were to sit next to each other in our social studies class, once again he was just Anthony to me. The tall, smart kid who my other table mate and I would call out constantly for talking to himself. However shortly after the school year began Anthony started to see me as something else.

Elise was the first in our group of friends to get a boyfriend, well actually she was the first to have a long term relationship, she and her boyfriend Mark started dating in 7th grade and have been together (almost) ever since. Elise and I are very close and often go to each other for boy advice, as well as we mettle in one another's love lives (always with the purpose of helping). I was noted in middle school for always liking at least one guy, my friends like to tell the story of the first day of middle school when I came running up to them and pointed out seven guys that I found cute. This was my life. Go to school, run around and be loud, goof off with my friends, crush on random guys but never date. It was a simple time and good for my hormonal 13 year old brain. This was my life until January 6, 2013 when my life took sharp turn. This is where my story begins.

That night I was lying in bed thinking about the one thing a 13 year old girl thinks about, boys. I had grown bored of my simple life and after third wheeling with Elise and Mark for many months, and discovering many of our other friends were pairing up I began to grown lonely. My dilemma was that I liked three different boys and I felt that I needed to decide who I wished to be with the most, who I wanted to be involved with in said relationship. I thought I had decided on one guy, a good friend of mine actually. I had the perfect monologue in my head for the moment when I told him that I liked him. However something was egging me inside that made me think it could all be a huge mistake. I started to realize that guy number three and I wouldn't work. That was when I became extremely confused. I wanted a lasting relationship but after ruling out all three boys, who? That night for the first time I prayed about love, my silent prayer went something like this "Lord, I am confused and don't understand. Please give me a sign about who I should be with. Please give me a sign."

The next moment shocked me, I wasn't prepared for what would happen and I still mull over those 10 surprising seconds to this day. After I said my silent prayer I began to think some more. Then the next thing I knew I got my sign. It came from a very small voice from the back of my head that doesn't sound one bit like me it was softer, deeper, and more thoughtful. This voice has only spoken up one other time afterwards. I will never forget the three words I heard next: "What about Anthony?" I

heard brakes go off in my head. Anthony?! Anthony! How could I forget about Anthony? The idea of being with the other guy was out of the question if it didn't work out with him I had no chance with Anthony. I clung to the idea of Anthony and realized I craved that chance. I wanted the chance to be with that boy who I knew so little about more than anything else. The earliest memory I have of Anthony is him sitting next to our mutual friend in a soccer shirt with a sweet amused expression on his face. I suddenly couldn't stop thinking about him and that shocked me. What they say is true when you fall in love for the first time you know because up until then you hadn't felt the same about anyone else. What they don't tell you is that it's very disorienting and alien that you feel like A)You have been hit by a bus B)Have developed some strange mind disorder where you can only focus on one person C)Smacked upside the head or D)All of the above.

The next day at school my suspicions about the other guy were confirmed, I watched Anthony closely for the the whole morning. The way his mouth twitched into a smile when he was writing, how he always had an answer, and the way he said "hello." By 4th period I was absolutely sure that I was falling for Anthony. I knew now was the time for action and later told Elise that night very tentatively "I think I like Anthony." Her first words back were "Ooooo the gentle giant! Nice!" She was very happy for me and I can quote her on saying "You finally like a nice guy!" She of course promised to help me and planned on interrogating Mark the next day (Mark is one of Anthony's best friends). School became very interesting I never realized how much Anthony was apart of my day to day life and learned that he was a lovely constant presence.

Elise returned and lied through her teeth saying "sorry chica Mark's lips are sealed." However like the schemers we were a plan was made. I had already asked out two other boys before and I planned on doing the same with Anthony. My birthday was that Friday, only four days away. Anthony seemed as of yet impartial of and unknowing of my existence. I left lunch that tuesday with one of my other good friends, (Alyssa) to walk to our 6th periods. It would have been normal except Anthony came with us. Shocked Alyssa and I glanced quickly at each other with wide eyes. As she broke off for her class she gave me a knowing smirk. Anthony stayed by my side the whole time till we came to my class he waved goodbye to me as I opened the door. I was at defcon two at this point and could barely wait to explode with Elise screeching "HE WALKED ME TO CLASS!"

I soon discovered what the worst part about love especially first love was the unknown. The period between realizing I had feelings for Anthony and actually dating him were nothing short of frustrating. Anthony showed no emotion so I was constantly wondering "what was he thinking?" "Does he like me as well?" "Is what I'm doing dorky and awkward?" It was important for me to learn that part of believing in something such as love is accepting the unknown. You don't always know what is going to happen, what you should do, what your object of affection is thinking, or if they're a notorious flasher that regularly likes to storm the field at sporting events with their goods on full display. The unknown is just apart of the love and it's important to not worry about it. Part of what contributed to my relationship with Anthony to come to an end was that I became paranoid over the unknown common questions in

my head where “If I text him will he think I’m clingy?” “Is he secretly laughing about me with his friends?” “Is what I’m doing dorky or awkward?” If he didn’t respond right away then I began to worry that I had done something wrong. Maybe first loves are about learning how not to be crazy when you’re in a relationship and just breathing.

The week went by slowly. On Wednesday I started to worry that if I asked out Anthony on my birthday that would put too much pressure on him, so I resolved to ask him out on Wednesday. I eagerly told my plan to Mark who I sat in front of in English, but I did not receive the equally eager reaction I had anticipated. “No don’t!” Mark quickly replied, I felt puzzled and defensively replied “why not?!” Mark had a look on his face that showed that he knew he had given too much away. He leaned forward and whispered quickly “look I know the side to both stories.” I thought about this for a moment, then my eyes grew wide “WHAT?!” I whipped my head around and looked at Anthony then back at Mark. “He likes? He likes me too?!” I gasped.

As I said earlier Anthony showed no signs of my existence besides walking me to class, this news came as a giant shock. When I ran into lunch and told Elise, I found out how her actual conversation with Mark went when she told him about my feelings for Anthony. I know it was something along the lines of Elise telling Mark that I liked Anthony and Mark freaking out and saying “Do you know who Mark likes?! He likes Annie!” However all was forgiven and we immediately proceeded to freak out. After lunch Anthony came right to my side and we encountered our first awkward moment. In front of us was Mark and Elise holding hands, and in front of them was another couple, our friends Hady and Josh who were as well holding hands. This left Anthony and I standing next to each other with absolutely no contact trying to make conversation, I suppressed the urge to reach over and grab his hand. I swear you could feel the awkward tension between Anthony and I.

The week did pass by, no matter how slow I thought it was going. I woke up on my birthday and immediately began to sweat when I remembered what was supposed to happen. Elise and I had strategically planned an outfit for me to wear and I was ready to go to school in record time. Of course my Mom dropped me off five minutes after the bell, and when Anthony and I made eye contact as I burst in to class we both blushed. As the day began I changed, I wanted more than anything now to slow down time and appreciate every minute and hopefully remember everything about that day months later. I kept trying to create moments where we would be alone all morning, I started up conversation with him and stuck to him like a leech. But that’s all I seemed to be to him, a leech. He was no different, and showed no signs of nerves, or really any idea that I was there. I was disgruntled even in my best dress he still didn’t express more than 10 syllables at a time. I wondered if Mark’s previous information about Anthony was actually true. However Mark assured me that if he didn’t ask me out that day “his head would be so far up his ass he would have to say yes on Monday.” With that awful image in my mind I kept my hope alive. Lunch was a blur I remember that as the minutes went by my friends began to worry about me because I despite that fact that it was the middle of January I was hot in a sleeveless chiffon dress. The bell rang for 5th period and it was now time for the moment of truth, I slowly put my

things in my backpack and acted oblivious to Anthony's friends patting him on the back. Anthony quickly walked over to me and we began to walk to class.

The nerves that he had done such a good job of hiding before were suddenly appearing. He began to stammer "so um I uh um" was a very common statement. He also cleared his throat every other word. Then he started listing signs of the flu shaking out his jacket and saying "It's hot in here, I don't feel good, God I can't see." I felt bad for him and wanted to take the pressure off of him and ask him myself, but I could barely speak. I began to shake a little myself eventually Anthony blurted out "I was wondering if you wanted to go out with me?" It was brutally awkward, but the boyish nerves he had were sweet. I didn't hesitate in saying "yeah I'd like that" (equally awkward I know). That's when I lost it I began to giggle uncontrollably. I was over the moon, someone had asked me! Me Annie! I didn't even have to chase him, and of all the guys the one I least expected! He finally asked me! The rest of the day was a blur I remember specific parts, such as making plans to see a movie with Anthony the next weekend. Anthony's friend running up to me asking me "did he do it?!" A standing ovation from my french class, followed by an idiot telling my french teacher "Madame, Annie a un petit copain." My friends greeting me at the end of the day with hugs, and seeing my boyfriend across the parking lot. That night I went out to dinner, I still remember what I wished for when I blew out my candle "I wish that Anthony and I will stay together forever, but only the right way." It was an innocent sweet wish that I smile at the way you would smile at a small happy go lucky child.

After this I stopped writing in my journal which doesn't pick up until about April, but I'll fill you in what happened in those precious three months. The first few months are the honeymoon phase. For Anthony and I they were the real happy months, even though we had agreed that we were very happy and extremely lucky for many months those three were the times when we were at our happiest and easiest. Anthony and I had gone on our first date to see a movie, I teased him about it for months afterwards, we barely spoke to each other and he ordered a large movie theater sized soda which he only took a three sips of, even though he had offered some to me I declined because I was so worried that I would have to leave to go the bathroom in the middle of the movie which would be surely embarrassing. We began to get closer and skyped a few times. Valentines day was sweet, I felt that the cookies I had baked him were nothing compared to the chocolate heart box with chocolates inside of it he gifted me. I also kept a poem he had written for me in my pocket for a week until I kept it on my nightstand so I wouldn't lose it.

Around that time we were on skype, and about to hang up Anthony asked me "is there anything else you want to say?" I took a deep breath and said "I love you?" His face went into shock and he replied with a blunt "what?" I back pedaled as awkwardly as a lovesick 14 year old could "Haha got you! Pranked you again!" I hastily replied, trying to cover up with a joke my friends and I had played on his friends earlier that day. I quickly hung up, I was pretty convinced of my insanity right about then. Then a message popped up from Anthony "Annie?" Anthony explained that in one of his favorite shows a guy say he loves a girl and she replies with "what?!" That was the first thing he thought of and felt bad

as soon as he said it “so before I go I just wanted to say I love you too.” I went nuclear and started screaming in to my pillow. When someone tells you that they love you for the first time the feeling is pretty weird, shaky, warm, and you feel like you could run a mile. I was that mile athlete and got no sleep.

Next month in March another first followed, our first kiss. If you haven’t noticed a theme yet then I’ll assure you it was awkward. Earlier in the week Anthony and I had gone on a double date with Hady and Josh. It was the most fun I had on a date, and I have since learned the value of double dates. Josh and Anthony were friends as well so we were all comfortable and when Hady and I lost the boys we went off and did our own thing. You have your wing women with you ready to step in. Anthony had just started to put his arm around me and had jokingly brought up kissing on valentines day (I didn’t know he was serious until months after). That Thursday though I knew something was up, he wasn’t as animated as usual when we walked to the buses after school, I was a little worried so I asked him what was up. “I was just thinking about doing something with this one person...” “Danny Devito?” was my blunt reply (I was pretty oblivious). “No you.” I thought a little bit and couldn’t come up with anything “well what is it?” That’s when I first got the look. Anthony has a look he uses when he’s thinking “think stupid, it’s right in front of you” then it dawned on me “Oh....” I looked away and we continued to walk. We said our usual goodbye hugged and walked away but I turned and looked back at the same time as him. I slowly made my way over to him (this wouldn’t be my first kiss but it was most certainly his). He tensed up his shoulders but held his ground. Slowly he leaned down and I stood on my tip toes and we kissed. I don’t remember much about it other than it was comical that they tell you that your first kiss should be in private when ours was in a bus lot after school.

Things progressed as usual. Track started in the spring and I was cultivating my love of running for the first time. Anthony and I frenched I was so nervous I forgot to open my mouth three times. Summer seemed just barely out of reach and the school was abuzz with talk about high school. I also realized that a divide between Elise and I was forming, foreshadowing how different we actually are. I had had a discussion with Anthony earlier about sex with the idea that we would still be together by the time we were 16. We would have been together for two years by then and I stated that if I was still with him after two years and I was 16 I would be open to possibly having sex with him. I presented it as an algebraic inequality. If x equals the age I lose my virginity then x is greater than or equal to 16. After I had spoken a storm led by Elise began. My friends were shocked that I would do that, thinking it was stupid and showed poor judgement on my part. While I did my best to defend myself it was hard as soon as Elise began the rest of our table joined in. When I asked them why they were doing this she said simply “you’re the only one we are concerned about.” I looked around, Anthony and I had been moving at what we thought was a fine pace. Though we had taken half as long as Elise and Mark to get there we were happy, but the lecture burst my bubble and made me realize a number of things. 1)Elise and I were not going to agree on a number of things 2)Judgement is bound to happen 3)The best thing you can do is walk away the best way to defend yourself and get out in one piece. That’s what I did I was fuming and embarrassed so I moved to a different table. I’m not proud of the silence I treated my

friends to the next day, but Elise soon figured out why I was mute and apologized. The subject has since been left out of most of our conversations.

I was falling hard for Anthony. That May I went on a trip for three days and though we talked every night we missed each other immensely. I thought he was perfect and god sent. I loved the way he spoke, the way he held me, how sweet he was, his intelligence, his eyes, his scent (very clear and sweet), and how safe I felt with him. This is when our love turned and though we didn't realize it we started to ruin our relationship. We talked every night, I thought it was sweet and was fine to talk for hours on end. He was the person I felt closest to and he was a rock to me. When I was around him I was on cloud 9 and felt like the luckiest girl alive. We also kissed, a lot. I admired how comfortable we were around each other but I didn't notice that we were forming a pattern. Meet, kiss, talk repeat. It was a vicious cycle, that neither of us wanted at first to break, by the time I wanted to break the cycle I was scared that in turn I would lose Anthony. May was a time for blissful ignorance. So while we had passion, we were careless. Love is as delicate as a flower and if you give it only sun it will die. This is what was beginning to happen to our flower. I regret not noticing earlier, then maybe we would have been able to part more amicably.

One thing about guys that has always confused me is there love for a girl that's taken. I understand the concept of wanting something you can't have but honestly girls do it so much sneakier. If a guy is interested in you or is flirting with you while you have a boyfriend it's pretty obvious. I'm very self confident I love my athletic body, and my at times frizzy unmanageable hair. However I can say that a year has done me well when I look back on the photos of my awkward curly lob I shudder. Yet as soon as I got together with Anthony the amount of male attention I received was mind boggling. As one of my dear friends put it "people label you undateable but once you start dating someone people see you as dateable" While Anthony would never seriously punch someone he came very close to it many times. One boy in our grade pushed really pushed the envelope (the worst case was when he kicked his foot up my skirt). I learned to carry around the rejection hotline number with me when I went on my trip in May, and track meets were a cause of annoyance. One meet in particular was pretty bad. It was cold only about 50 degrees out and raining, I had brought a shiny metal emergency blanket with me as back up. My clothes were very soon soaked so the blanket was brought out, my friend and I laughed as we walked around under the "space blanket." The boys from the rival school however weren't just interested in just the blanket. "Hey girl in the blanket! My friend thinks your hot!" We ignored them for the most part which got easier as we became colder and we were more concerned about our goose bumps than guys.

My last race of the day was the 4x200, I ran anchor and was nervous that I would drop the slippery baton, I ran over to Anthony and made sure I was in full view of the boys who kept calling out to me and I hugged him. I pointed the boys out to Anthony who glared at them. Happy and convinced that my 6'2" boyfriend had intimidated the other boys to leave me alone I walked stiffly to my event. After the race was over the coaches began to worry about me. I was really cold, my fingers were

starting to lose circulation one of my fingers was pure white and the others were slowly turning from pale purple to white. They quickly had me wrapped in my emergency blanket. Anthony's snap came when two boys from the other team tried to force themselves to huddle with me in the emergency blanket. He pulled them off and pushed them away. After that he was never less than within 4ft of me. It's an awful thing to try and make your partner jealous. While at first you enjoy watching their expression you feel truly awful about it. So if I could I avoided talking about other guys.

It was June, it was summer at last. I would now be able to spend as much time as I wanted with Anthony and my friends. I had a whole three months to look forward to! I would describe end of June and the beginning of July as...fun. If I wasn't running around with my best friend Louise I was with Anthony. Anthony had a pool in his backyard and lived about 15 minutes away from something that I would describe as a cross between a strip mall and an actual mall. This is when we really created a habit. I would come over and we would stay in his room for a bit, go for a walk and get ice cream, when we got back to his house we usually either went back into his room or went swimming. Alternately I would sit around and gossip and eat with Louise, usually about Anthony. At this point she made a point of saying "I seriously think you are going to marry him" I smiled and didn't say anything but I'm guilty of thinking "I would really love that, yeah I think so too."

Just a little side note I've gone through what I wrote in my journal for that period of time and it makes me want to gag. I know, I know that's pretty sad. I was beyond the point of actually loving Anthony and now had a really bad case of puppy love. If someone asked him who his girlfriend was, a golden retriever was a justifiable answer. I now thought about him for a majority of my day, I talked to him all night, and even if a topic had nothing to do with him I found ways to elude it to my boyfriend. Being in a relationship with Anthony I also wanted to prove people wrong and show them that I could marry my first love! Now I had found a way to make my relationship a contest, great. I made comparisons with how I was when I was single and pitied my lonely life. But when I said I was more self centered, I had more time for being a nerd, and that I was smarter. I was referring to my high self confidence, my grades (which were so much higher when I wasn't focused on what Anthony would think of the outfit I would wear the next day), and the choices I made were better judged and were the practical logical solution. To quote Anthony "Listen to your head, it's more logical than your heart." While I don't like to say it, he was right. I listen to my head now and I appreciate the long term rewards and the straight forward solution. So yes I am smarter now that I'm single, but unlike what I thought I'm not lonely. I'm really happy right now, and I'm more satisfied with myself and what I'm doing with my time then how I was when I was with Anthony. In fact I think I was probably more lonely when I was with Anthony. When I wasn't talking to him all the time and I was alone with my own thoughts I didn't know what to think about so I thought about Anthony. Anthony who was off doing his own thing and I couldn't talk to him. Then I began to feel an awful achy feeling in the middle of my stomach.

A couple change in events started to shake my happy little world. The first came at the end of July. I had just returned from a trip to the beach and Hady was back from a big soccer trip to Italy.

Alyssa wanted me to meet her at the strip/mall thing with her her boyfriend and some of our friends. I was happy to tag along with them. I had practically no face to face interaction with my friends outside of school. Other than texting Elise who was having issues with Mark, and staying in my small little bubble with Anthony I might as well as moved to russia. Everything was perfectly normal and I was really excited to see Alyssa but then I got a weird text from one of my friends “has it happened yet?” I had no idea what they were talking about but they refused to tell me what they were talking about so I just shook it off. Alyssa and I were walking around with a couple of our friends and decided to go and sit in a fro-yo shop for a bit. Alyssa’s boyfriend had left earlier and started wandering around with some of his friends. Then out of nowhere he walked in and asked Alyssa if he could speak to her in private. I raised my eyebrows and my eyes met Alyssa’s she got up and walked over to where he stood. After watching him make some hand gestures. She nodded her head and they walked in opposite directions she came over to me “It’s over” she said simply.

I knew where a bathroom was in the back and I quickly ushered her away before she started to cry. It’s hard. When you hold your best friend for the first time. I felt helpless and I didn’t know what to do. So I just held her while she cried. After sometime she began to quiet down. I was in full fledged maternal mode and started to pat her face with a cool towel while she talked. I tried to reassure her and make her feel better and I hope I did my best. I texted Elise and informed her of what happened, and Alyssa was texting Hady who showed up shortly. Hady looked tan and happy. We quickly took Alyssa to a baskin robins and made her drink a milkshake we bought. Then we tried our best to avoid her now ex who we knew to be lurking about still. A week later I went to eastern oregon. I of course talked to Anthony almost every night but I was enjoying my time in the sun. Then I got a text from Anthony “Annie, Haddy broke up with Josh.” What?! Were we dropping like flies?! Later I talked to Haddy, with her trip to Italy and a few other factors she just wasn’t into Josh anymore.

I was beginning to get worried. I thought my friends and I and our boyfriends were going to be together for a really long time. What happened to that? Why was everyone breaking up? Mark and Elise were having problems as well! How long was it before the same happened to Anthony and I? We had had no arguments or issues at this point, would we just snap at some random moment? I began to try and be as careful as I could but it had quite the opposite of my intentions. What happened to all those couples was summer. It separates couples or brings them to close. While summer loves are dreamed about what happens to those winter romances? Summer tests your relationship you’re now responsible for how you’re going to see each other. So how do you? Anthony and I resolved to see each other as much as possible that was what Hady and Mark decided to do as well. But what happened with Alyssa and her boyfriend and Hady and Josh was that they barely saw each other. Hady was in Italy for a big soccer tournament so when she came back after being separated from him for so long it wasn’t working. How do you find balance? What’s the right amount of contact that ensures your relationship will stand up through summer? The answer is unclear and like so many things it’s up to you. Knowing the warning signs of when you’re making a bad habit of something that is killing your relationship is something I’m only now starting to understand. The one thing that I hope is that all the

other times it doesn't work out, it's so you can learn for the one that counts.

Vacation was over and I was happy to return home where I could see Anthony again. I remember for a short two weeks everything was happy, he left for the beach and even left his sweatshirt at my house for me to wear while he was gone. I was still crazy about him and. I thought he felt the same. Unfortunately as the summer was beginning to come to a close things took a turn for the worst, and I was blind sided. I was going to have a bunch of friends over but half of them were on vacation so it wouldn't have worked. Despite this I still had Anthony come over. We were hanging out in my room all was calm I was happy and just staring at his face. He sat up looked at me and blurted out "do you think we make out too much?" I wanted to answer with "yes" but I couldn't speak. I thought that he was happy, and I was making him happy. I hadn't really thought about what we were doing and how much we stayed in our rooms. Yes we had talked about what our limits were and I had asserted mine when they needed to be. But I thought that this was what he wanted, so I didn't question it even though it bothered a part of me. So if he didn't want that anymore what else did he not want? "Me." I thought. This slowly sunk in and. I suddenly felt sick. This wasn't going to happen to us too, it couldn't! I got up and moved away from him. When I could finally speak I asked him "do you?" He shrugged his shoulders. I moved to the other side of the room. An escape came up when my mom asked me to take out some trash. I moved slowly and carefully my mom noticed and asked if anything was wrong but I smiled weakly and said I was fine.

I came back in the room Anthony sat on my bed with his head in his hands. As I closed to door behind me he looked up. I couldn't take it. I started to cry, "please don't break up with me" was all I said. Even though he promised he wouldn't I kept repeating myself. He came over and hugged me. I felt his body shake and I looked up and saw he was beginning to cry. This sent me overboard. I stood on chair so I could look him in the eyes "listen to me" I commanded him and brought my hands to his face. "I love you, and I don't want to go a day without you, I believe in this and I want this. I will work as hard as I can to make this work. Okay?" He nodded and said he felt sick. He asked if he could sit down so I stepped off the chair so he could, I turned and walked towards my bed when I heard the chair slide and the sound of something hard hitting the ground. It was Anthony's head. I whipped back around and saw him slumped in the corner of my door jam. "Oh my god! Anthony! Anthony?!" I started yelling and I ran over to where he was. He opened his eyes slowly and groggily asked me "what happened?" "you passed out!" I was freaking out, his left eyebrow was bleeding badly.

At this point my Mom came had stormed over. She heard Anthony fall from the kitchen and heard me screaming and came over to investigate. I was getting Anthony up and I explained to her what happened. We moved Anthony over to the bathroom and I was instructed to get the phone so we could call his mom (he was going to need stitches), and To have my sister go get our neighbor for additional help. I gave her his phone and after some trouble with figuring out who to call, my mom got on the phone with his mother who was going to come and pick him up. My sister was a little bit harder, "Josephine you need to go get help from next door." I hastily explained. "What are you talking about"

she squawked I tried to rationalize it was an emergency and it took a good five minutes to get her to move. Then she saw my mom in the bathroom with Anthony who was holding a towel to his forehead and she quickly left. We gave him some water and decided to move him to my room where he could sit on my bed until his mom came. We didn't get very far. We were barely out of the bathroom before he passed out again. Now I was really worried, though she didn't show it my mom was too. "I'm going to call for the paramedics you stay here with him" she said coolly. Anthony was waking up again and I explained that he had passed out once again. My dad was home at that point and the paramedics weren't too far behind. When they showed up they moved. Anthony to my room, I was now shaking and explained to one of them what had happened. They were concerned because his blood pressure kept dropping every time he stood up. They also weren't too happy with the fact that he had only a cookie, orange juice, and a slurpee to eat that day (he didn't want any other food when I offered some). They moved him from my room to couch, they didn't seem worried anymore, and as the rest were packing up one of them left to hand out stickers to the neighborhood kids Anthony kept his head down and I sat stiffly next to him. His mom came shortly I kept apologizing as we got him into the car and then they left.

The next few hours were terrible, I nervously checked my phone often. I wanted to text him but I was so nervous for the reply I didn't say anything. I explained to my neighbors what had happened and sat at their house nervously pacing. I felt bad for how I reacted when he tried to speak with me and I wish I would have said what I was thinking. I couldn't take it anymore and I texted him asking him about how he was, he texted me back an hour later, it took a couple of hours before he was out of the ER, he needed stitches and had his head scanned. The official report for the reason he passed out? Emotional stress. Later that night he called me and I wanted to take the chance to apologize for how I acted, I wanted to compromise and talk about it. I agreed with him and I wanted to discuss it. Before I got the chance to say anything though Anthony told me to just listen "Annie I'm really really sorry I'm sorry I put you through that." I began to apologize also for how I acted and I said I agreed with what he was talking about earlier but he interrupted saying "no that was stupid for me to bring up! I don't care about it and I was being an idiot don't worry about it!" I was still skeptical "Annie after I passed out the second time something happened and when I saw you there, it made me so happy. I'm glad you were there."

We hung up and I began to think. My whole image or idea of him being my rock was now shattered, he now seemed...delicate. I was mad that he wasn't freaking out like I was, that he didn't care as much as I did or at least that's how it seemed. What I didn't know was Anthony had actually been thinking about breaking up with me. But while he was waiting to get his stitches in he decided to give me a second chance. The second chance that I never knew about until his friend told me after we had been broken up for over a month. This is how Anthony contributed to the break up, he never told me what was going on. That had been our first dramatic conflict in our relationship and he chose to go mute as a solution.

As time went by our relationship began to grow tense. I was becoming increasingly nervous and paranoid, he was becoming distant and nonchalant. The puppy love that was once there was now gone. I held on to the relationship like a lifeline now, I rationalized that after a period of time if I continued to hold on to the relationship it would get better. I was scared of what would happen and what was the right thing to do. I have a friend at church who I see as my big sister so one Sunday we sat down and I let everything that had happened so quickly over the past few weeks off my chest. She listened patiently, and afterwards asked me a simple question "do you want to call it?" I opened my mouth to say no but then stopped, I sat back and thought. "I'm not sure" was my honest reply. I really didn't know what to do, part of me wanted to call it but the clingy part of me, the part that was scared to be alone, clung to being in a relationship. I was still in love with Anthony but it was that Anthony I remembered from the winter and spring.

It was Elise's birthday, and I showed up to her party fashionably late I walked over and waved to everyone and went to kiss Anthony, he obliged but when he kissed me it was different, like he didn't want to kiss me. It wasn't any different from kissing the back of my hand like how I used to when I was little, there was no emotion. I was startled but I shook it off and tried to enjoy myself but it was easy to see that something was going on. Anthony was very quiet the whole night and at one random point came over and hugged me very tight and kissed the top of my head. This was unusual and seemed like a very bittersweet action, it made me sad. Later that night around a campfire I walked over behind him and wrapped my arms around him, I felt that that may be one of the last times I would be able to do that. I spoke in code with Elise that night about Anthony, and referred to my relationship as a book, what was going on was a twist in the plot. We were both scared about how my story would end.

The first day of school started and ended on completely different hemispheres. I spent the night before running around because "I HAVE NOTHING TO WEAR!" After I decided on a simple dress and shoes I felt ready to go. When I got to school I was full of nervous energy. I was extremely bubbly, when I ran into my friend Makayla it was like we hadn't been apart and I ran up to meet her with a stream of swear words that came from my (as my friends like to call it) "potty mouth." I saw Anthony enter the gym for the first day of school assembly and was surprised when he sat next to Makayla and I with Mark. The day went by fast I saw him at lunch and gave him a kiss that was once again flat. But he later found Elise and I and seemed fine, he hugged me and picked me up off the ground we walked around holding hands and even raced down the steps. I quietly hoped that maybe things were changing for the better. Science was my last class on the day and the only one I had with Anthony, he didn't sit next to me but I didn't think much of it. Finally the bell tolled and Anthony and I walked out of class hand in hand.

Anthony seemed off, I didn't know what it was but it reminded me of how he acted before we kissed for the first time. I asked him if he was okay but he kept assuring me he was fine. I let the subject drop and asked hopefully "do you want to talk later?" Back in the spring "talking" referred to calling each other. But Anthony dropped my hand and said "we can talk now." My stomach dropped "oh" I

said quietly. We walked out to the front steps where he turned and looked at me and spoke “It’s not going to work out, what with high school starting it’s too hard, and I don’t care about you as much as I used too.” That’s all he said, I’ve imagined what I would have done differently so many times but I could only say one thing “oh.” I looked up at him and he had a pitying look on his face. I was wearing a bracelet he had given me a week earlier, I took it off now and handed it back to him. Slowly I turned away. “Goodbye Annie” he whispered, I turned and looked at him, I realized I couldn’t go back. I walked forward to my new life. My strange new life.

I went up to my friend Tyrone first. I refused to cry, not here. Not in front of everyone, but when I caught him on his way to the bus it was hard to keep back the tears. “Anthony just broke up with me” I hated having to admit it to myself. Tyrone was confused at first but only for a few seconds before he pulled me in for a hug. I slowly walked over to the bus I would take for swim practice, everyone stared at me as I took an empty seat and began to stare out the window. I was shaking, my eyes began to sting but I would not cry. I looked over to my friend Rose (who is a saint, and one of the sweetest antidotes to the pain I felt from heartbreak) “please tell me this a bad dream” I begged her, she looked at me sadly “I really wish I could” she replied. Swim practice was hard, I worked the hardest that day to distract myself but I stopped frequently hyperventilating because some new wave of pain kept hitting me. Anthony was gone, wasn’t he god sent to me? What was the little voice for? I’m not allowed to love him anymore! I stood out front and waited for my mom to pick me up, shuddering. My swim coach was walking to his car and passed by me, he was also at one point Anthony’s discus coach (Anthony is a very talented shot put and discus thrower). He gave me a bittersweet smile and a one arm hug.

My mom pulled in to pick me up, as soon as I was safely in the car I lost it. Tears began to flow down my face in strong volume, I was sobbing uncontrollably. My mom placed her arm around me. I had called her minutes after Anthony left me and asked if I had to go to swim practice. She sighed and said I did, I’m now grateful she did, if she didn’t make me go that one day I don’t think I would’ve gone back. Swim team was a great distraction while I was still in mourning and I’m lucky to have girls who supported me. One girl in particular besides Rose who is another one of my “adopted” older sisters, brought me chocolate punching balloons and a sweet card the next day. I received a lot of chocolate during those first days. Chocolate really is a wonderful antidote.

That first week flew by. The highlights I remember of that week were sitting on my neighbors deck discussing my first day dump, eating chocolate, and awkwardly making eye contact with Anthony in science we both made a “yeah…” face. A girl getting over heartbreak is a very interesting personality to study. At first I was numb but once it hit me I was constantly flipping back and forth between being in love with Anthony or wanting to punch him in the nose. I loved the idea of old Anthony and was willing to do anything to get him back. I hated the fact that I felt blindsided. I was even expecting the relationship to get better because high school would once again be responsible for us seeing each other. I hated that I felt like I had no closure or any concept of what was going on. For two weeks Anthony

and I were friends. I broke the ice first, and we were doing fine. During that time I won intermediate state champion in fitting showing with my rabbit (I know it doesn't get dorkier than that, but I love it and I'm obsessed). Other than being overjoyed because I didn't expect to win, when I texted Anthony and told him he seemed genuinely happy for me. He understood that this was a really big deal for me, and for awhile it seemed like we would be friends. But a week later out of nowhere he began to ignore me and I became snarky around him. That first month was really interesting, I invested in a revenge dress (a dress that makes you feel oh so confident) and was pleased with the results. I became obsessed with swimming and at homecoming I kissed Tyrone. Nothing came out of it, we're still friends and we both agreed that the kiss needed to happen so nothing would happen and we saved our friendship.

In October I stopped denying that I had moved on from Anthony. He and I weren't on speaking terms but I still would stare at him with a depressed look as a pass time. I owned up that I really missed him and really wanted him back. I talked to Rose and Elise and said earnestly, "I'm getting my f#%&ing boyfriend back!" I apologized to Anthony for being rude and he apologized as well for acting distant and ignoring me, I also apologized for how I acted in the end and said he deserved better. You could say that when it comes to dealing with guys I'm usually on point but there are certain cases where I have zero tact, this would be one of those times. Both extremely eager and a "I'm trying so hard" kind of cute right off the bat I'm sure Anthony knew what my intentions were. Never the less we talked, but by the end of the month he was just as distant and made me feel terrible about myself, I knew the talking had to stop.

Then in November another change came, Elise and Mark broke up. It was the start of a very crazy roller coaster relationship. I made Elise brownies, but as soon as I saw Mark I gave him a hug. Elise had my main attention, but she was pulling away. I found a friend in Mark, we had never been close before but soon we started to talk. Mark is the boy version of me, we share similar physical traits but we also act the same. Many people have come up to us and asked if we were cousins and now we just answer "yes." He was able to relate to how I felt, give me feedback on how Anthony was doing, and I was able to just rant to him and he to me. In fact if it weren't for him telling me why Anthony broke up with me in the first place and Elise's caring help, I don't think I would have gotten any closure and I would be far worse off. I tried my best to help him through the break up and he spent an hour one night just trying to talk Anthony in to getting back together with me. When I had a fight with Anthony one night in November where we each got everything off our chest, Mark was there to help me come up with my next retort. I was his first friend that was a girl, and to me he is a brother.

However Elise took priority, when she saw Mark and I talking about math one day she burst into tears and ran away. I went to console her, I was happily there for Elise and while I was given away as being a double agent by her double agent, we supported each other. Mark missed her like crazy and I saw that she did too. Mark had been begging me to help him get her back, and I did my best. One day he walked past her in the hall and as he turned the corner she looked at me, it was a sheepish "what do I do?" look. "Do you want me to hold your stuff" I asked with an eye roll. She dropped her bags

and ran after him, and just like that Mark and Elise were back together.

Where did this leave me? Well it's now December, Mark and Elise were busy with each other, a few weeks earlier when I had brought up Anthony Elise warily asked me "will you ever get over him?" I had gone on dates with other guys. But I couldn't shake Anthony, one day I broke down sobbing saying "why can't I just get over him already?!" I was so frustrated that I hadn't moved on when that was the only thing I wanted. I knew what I had to do, the messages he sent me that I kept were deleted, a text I kept of his apology was gone, and I focused on keeping myself busy. I began to fantasize about track and worked out as much as I could, and even more than that I focused as much as I could on school. My grades began to rise and I found myself feeling better. Then out of nowhere at the start of winter break I didn't have feelings for him anymore, I just didn't care. It was so sudden it was just like how I had fallen in love with him. At first I was a little worried by how quickly I had changed but when I felt butterflies on christmas eve when a very sweet guy from my church hugged me I knew I was free, and when the new year came I was relieved the year I fell crazy in love was over.

On my birthday I had all of my friends over, from Hady, to Mark, to Louise, to Josh (he and Hady are now friends). I realized that while last year was life changing this year and so much more fun now that I knew that I can feel like a whole person alone just as much as I can when I have a boyfriend. With everyone who I loved standing around me singing happy birthday I thought to myself "here we go." I blew out all my candles in one puff and made my wish, and realized that last years really did come true. If I was still with Anthony it wouldn't have been the right way. In conclusion, I now sit by Anthony in science, he's a bit of a know it all, but we tolerate each other, maybe we will be friends. I'm exactly how I said I was when I'm single self confident, smart, classy, but I'm very very happy. I may or may not be falling for someone else, but this time I'm ready for it. Falling in love for the first time is a very dramatic event, the most important thing is that you learn from it and thrive. My experience with love is both positive and negative, but I loved and I came out alive. I was thrown challenges I had never faced before. In the end when you are given a challenge in love you have two options 1) let it beat you down and figuratively die or 2) you survive and thrive. It took me awhile but I finally started following the second option. I hope you all do as well.