I believe that every person we meet in life is a lesson. Of course, it depends on how you look at it.

I never thought of Ben that way- I always pictured him as an inconvenience, just one more untied string that my life seemed to be made up of.

We had always known each other- if I were a different person then I would tell you we had been childhood friends. My first memory of Ben was in fifth grade when he named all of his erasers after Canadian Prime Ministers, and I made it my mission to pull each of the erasers off the end of his pencils and hoard them in a secret pocket of my backpack. This cycle made up most of our relationship- I would take things from him just because I could.

Now, I’m not a mean or awful person, it wasn’t my purpose to make him sad- it just sort of happened. I would twist and contort things in my mind- if I thought about it hard enough then I could find a way to make the situation become what I wanted it to be. But throughout this I would always assume what he was thinking and feeling without ever actually asking him.

I don’t remember exactly, but I think he asked for my phone number somewhere between fifth and sixth grade and then proceeded to ask me if I wanted to come over to his house via a carefully written note. I couldn’t have been more flattered, it was just like High School Musical when Troy asked for Gabriella’s phone number and none of my friends had ever been asked out before, so obviously this was epic.

I expected everything that followed that to be just as epic. But it wasn’t. Beginnings are always the best, everything that follows is just the trail left behind from the shooting star.

We had always e-mailed and sent notes to each other but in person we were always so awkward. And even though he was perfectly nice I found all these flaws within him. He had an awful sense of humor and he was really sensitive and would cry often. So, I began to contemplate how I would break up with him, I mean I just wasn’t feeling the magic anymore. All my friends agreed I should cut the cord, and that made it final.

I would write down on pink sticky notes the exact lines that I would recite to him to let him know it was over. I made sure that I was precise, but at the same time I didn’t want to hurt his feelings. I would tell myself I would do it at the corner where we parted ways every day after school. But I would always chicken out, I could never gather up the courage to actually do it. But really, everything that happened between Ben and I was magnified by how little we were and how that made everything a huger deal than it actually was. Really, Ben wouldn’t have been so devastated if I did break up with him.

But in the end I never actually broke up with him. I stuck it out until one day at that corner Ben awkwardly asked if I ever noticed how we never do anything and then we tumbled down in conversation that ended in a completely cheesy “we can still be friends” when his mom drove by in her minivan.

And that’s it. I never really talked to Ben after that. But I do remember how once I was half- asleep and my mind began wandering and I imagined a life where I never told Ben what I was feeling, and I realized that was possible. And I realized that there were two options in life; you could stay on earth, in the nice grass where nothing could hurt you but you never really felt anything. Or you could fly up, and let your feet lift from the ground and float up and up and feel happy, but of course there’s always the chance that you might fall down back to earth and it might hurt. And I realized that I chose to fly over staying on the earth, because it’s always better to take the risk and get hurt than to do nothing at all. And even though I didn’t make that choice with Ben I learnt that lesson and that makes everything worth it.