

oops.

Once upon a time, I accidentally started dating a girl. It seemingly happened without me even trying to start up a relationship, and before I knew it, I was dating her.

At the beginning of October in my final year of middle school, I was called over to a table across the room by my friend Dawson. He and Rachel had been whispering pointedly for nearly ten minutes at that point, and I was about to be let in on their conspiracy. I pretended to get up and sharpen my pencil, casually standing within range of their whispered questions to me.

“Do you like Sarah?” they asked me. At the time, I was hopeless to pick up the romantic connotations within their question, and so I confidently responded that “of course I did! She’s super cool.” Before I could blink, Rachel was handing me a folded slip of paper with ten digits scrawled across it and assuring me that “good, because she really likes you too! You should give her a text tonight when you get home.”

The bell cut through my mind and the shrill screeching illuminated the social undertones in the previous question that I had been too naive to catch. I had just “confessed” to a crush that I didn’t have. And even worse, Rachel was definitely going to tell Sarah the next time they ran into each other. “If I can make it to Sarah first and just explain the whole situation,” I thought to myself, “this will all be alright. I can admit that this was all a silly misunderstanding on my part and we can continue being friends.”

I slammed my papers into their place in my plastic folder and spiked my pen into my backpack. Before the bell had stopped echoing through the classroom, I was out in the hallway, running for the stairs. Rachel, somehow, was even further along than I was. As I turned the

corner to the row of lockers where Sarah and I were neighbors, my heart fell seeing Rachel and Sarah already deep in conversation.