This article is being written for my one-year anniversary with boyfriend, Doug. It’s probably going to get a little cliché and a bit cheesy here and there, but everyone knows it's always fun to indulge in a sappy story. Hopefully some of you can also relate in your own ways.

Doug,

On February 11th, 2017 we went out on our first date. I had never been on a date before, I had never had my first kiss before, and I certainly had never had a guy really interested in me before (and I was brutally embarrassed because of all of this). Ultimately, I was and still am baffled that you chose me out of all the people in the world to like, let alone to fall in love with—but I’m getting ahead of myself here.

We had met a few times in the fall semester when you came up to visit our mutual friends, since you weren’t attending BU yet, and we hit it off. Even though we can’t have an elaborate fairytale story on how we met, let alone one that’s not complicated to tell as these mutual friends are no longer in our lives, I’m glad we have it nonetheless. I wouldn’t trade it for the world. We would chat every day, and speaking to you became one of the things I looked forward to most. Then, in January, you moved in for the Spring semester. I was a mixture of “elated or gassy” (Frozen reference, I had to, you love me) because I had no idea what the future would hold; all I knew was I’d have more time with you, and I was very okay with that.

Then, in what seemed like the blink of an eye, we were going on our first date. We went to a restaurant in the North End, Artu, and saw *A Dog’s Purpose*—probably the most classic, wholesome date in existence. Even though I was expecting a ton of awkward moments, there weren’t any; it was just a sweet, relaxing night out. And I will say, I’m very proud that you restrained from slurping your pasta. Three days later on Valentine’s Day, you knocked on my door with flowers and chocolate and proceeded to take me ice-skating. You were a bit unsteady on the ice at first, but of course, I had to be the one to almost wipe out—you still caught me, though. (And, to be really cheesy, you’ve caught me every time I’ve fallen ever since.)

Later in the year, and I won’t go into detail for the sake of embarrassment, we admitted that we loved each other. Well, I would like to point out that I brought it up first because*clearly*, I wear the pants in this relationship– I’m just kidding (maybe). Regardless of who wears the pants, it was another moment that I’ll cherish forever.

The two months preceding our perfect first moments were, well, perfect. And then the unimaginable happened. Our “friend” sexually assaulted me, and it felt like our lives were thrown upside down. I didn’t know how to deal with myself, I couldn’t figure out how to breathe anymore, and I wasn’t really sure I wanted to continue living for a while. But you stuck by my side. Without hesitation, you stayed by me and supported me, knowing that you would lose two very good “friends” in the process. But you love me and truly showed how much you love me during this time. You never left my side for weeks and made sure that I was getting the help I needed and was taking care of myself. On the days I couldn’t, you’d grab food for me and help me get dressed and just go outside for a walk. You truly were my knight in shining armor. You were the thing that got me through what I’d consider to be the worst experience of my life to date, and the person that kept me breathing when I didn’t think I could anymore.

I want to thank you for everything else you’ve ever done for me, and trust me you’ve done a lot. You constantly help me through moments when I struggle with anxiety, never failing to get me past my dark moments and to put a smile on my face. You always make me feel loved and safe and can do so when we’re miles apart. You put me first, even when you’re going through a difficult time as well. There’s no way I can ever repay you for all of the love you’ve brought into my life, but I will always try to constantly bring love into yours, too.

Besides all of the serious moments, you also put up with my ridiculous cravings for bubble tea at 9 pm, my addiction to books and Disney, and my constant need for a nap at least once a day and for a minimum of an hour. You say I’m beautiful when my hair’s an absolute rat’s nest with the little hairs sticking out in “Cess fluffs,” when I have no makeup on and bad breath, and when I’m so cranky you’re scared to even look at me. (But, hey, I have to deal with your morning breath, too, so it’s fair!)

Here’s to one year. Here’s to going sailing and relaxing on the beach one day and sitting around watching *Grey’s Anatomy* and playing Overwatch the next. Here’s to going on McDonald’s runs at 12 am for fries or ordering just a slice of cheese at the new touch-screen menus to see what the employees will say. Here’s to being us, the goofy but loving couple that people probably look at and wonder how we ever venture out in public together, because jeez, are we weird. Here’s to a healthy, loving relationship and a life full of love.

***I love you, Doug, and happy anniversary.***

***Cess***