

After a while I learned the difference between holding a hand and falling in love. I began to learn that kisses don't always mean something, that promises can be broken just as easily as they are made, and that sometimes goodbyes really are forever. I came to the understanding that people are imperfect and will let me down, and that even my most trusted best friend could be my worst enemy in disguise. However, the truth is that although my heart may get broken, if I don't take the chance, I'll never know what might have been.

The memories are still fresh in my mind; memories of how it all began, memories that shaped me into who I am today. My best friend and I were as close as best friends could be, hanging out in the morning before school with the gentle breeze sweeping around us. We knew everything there was to know about each other and spent as much time together as was possible despite wind, sleet, or snow. I didn't even have to knock when I came over to spend the night; her house was like a second home to me. We were there for each other through the obstruction that life threw our way, enduring the anguish and carrying each other's burdens. Young and naïve, we believed that absolutely nothing could come between the special bond we shared. But we were wrong, so very wrong.

Growing up is meant to be the best years of life spent learning, experimenting, changing. But I have come to find that much of those years are filled with pain, whether it be the pain of failure, embarrassment, shame, or the pain of heartbreak, abandonment, and betrayal. It's through our experiences that we gain wisdom for the future, and it's through our experiences we learn valuable lessons about people. Something I've learned is that people change as they grow, and thus I welcome change at every change I get; whether it be an adjustment in the clothes I wear to my taste in musical preference. It is a necessity to live, to adapt to a constantly changing world. People need to change just like they need to grow or love.

My best friend changed, and her change was so rapid it was as if it occurred in only one night. From that point she began to treat me differently and a great amount of discord followed. The first sign was that we were constantly bickering, and instead of the usual pointless discussions we had in the hall while walking to our next class, it was silent between us, only a few glares every now and then from her. Though I was surrounded by people, I couldn't have felt more alone. We argued more at that time than we ever had before. It was as if every conversation we started would end in dispute. I suppose I should have known more about what was going on then. Maybe on some level I did, I was just too ignorant to admit it. I didn't want to have to know about it; I didn't want anything to bring me down, even if I was already down to begin with.

In the weeks that followed, we ended practically all contact with each other. I would act like the problems didn't exist, as if pretending would make it fact. Looking back now, it seems so foolish to lie like that, but I guess it made the truth easier to deal with. Exchanged words were few but fierce. We rarely communicated, but when we did the conversation was volatile as the vituperative comments were passed back and forth through the telephone wire. I never understood exactly what had sparked her sudden change of heart towards me, whether it was something I did or some misinterpretation. She decided to choose her temporary boyfriend over the people who cared for her and watched out for her, and I believe that was what had helped to set off our fight. All I can say is that with each abusive word she spoke to me, my heart felt like it was being ripped apart, piece by piece.

It is my personal experience that loving someone is easy and letting go is the hard part. Yet, despite all of the tears I've cried and the sleepless nights spent wondering what went wrong in the relationship, I eventually moved on. Pulling myself together again, I sewed up the open wounds she had left, curious all the while if she regretted her decision to end our friendship, or if she even cared about what became of me at all. I don't hold grudges because they only lead to bitterness, something I would rather stay away from. Besides, life is much too short to live with regrets and resentment. Live each day to the fullest and don't look back on the past in remorse. Just let life happen, no matter how hard it may be to do.

There are many things I would like to forget, like all of the suffering a simple conflict with my best friend had caused. But that's not true, I want them; I want to hold onto as many memories as I can. After all, I don't have much else left. Still, I can't help but to speculate what I could have done to keep our amity from unraveling and falling apart, but I've learned friendships are somewhat like stories—they have a beginning, middle, and an end. Nonetheless, every new beginning must come from some other beginning's end. My life is getting better; day by day it's getting better. I'm convinced that the best days of my life are just starting. At least that's the hope, my hope.