

Macky's Quest for a Hot Prom Date

“Ugh, another school assembly. I cannot handle sitting through this mundane monthly ritual again,” William whines. William is a whiner, like almost everyone else at this school.

“Shut up, Willy. This is clearly preferable to art electives.” William looks at me like I'm insane. Clearly a moron like him would prefer macaroni necklaces to hilarious spectacle of adolescent incompetence.

“Scholars, please rise for the pledge of allegiance,” our principal Dr. Snider orders. All 250ish of us rise sluggishly (there are 300 in the school but some lucky ones are not invited to the assemblies for uniform infractions or gum chewing or other irrelevant nonsensical rule-breaking). “Jahier, MycKaela, Orlando, and EVERYONE else not in uniform, head over to the detention room IMMEDIATELY. Or do you all need a personal invitation?” Snidey sneers rudely. Seventeen more scholars lollygag out of the misery that is about to be this assembly.

Pledge, scholar's creed, and our horrible butchering of “Lift Every Voice and Sing.” Clearly these peasants do not realize that James Wheldon Johnson was hyperbolizing when he said “EVERY voice.” This squawking cannot be what he intended for our national anthem.

“Sit.” The entire auditorium complies with Snidey's condescending canine command. Then, there is waiting. These things are never organized. There is clearly commotion behind the stage, but the curtain is drawn so I can only imagine the catfight the dancers' claws are caught in.

William is hiding his juice (assembly contraband) behind the book bag he has propped on his lap. He looks like a baby sucking a bottle, about to embark upon deep assembly slumber. My skinny, pokey elbow jabs him in the ribs and he glares at me. “Today, Willy, I will begin phase one of my quest.” Blank stare. Why I picked such a dummy for a best friend is beyond me. I think it might be from watching too many episodes of *Pinky and the Brain*. “Macky's quest for a hot prom date.” Willy laughs so hard he spits his smuggled juice out of his nose and soaks me. “Thanks for your support, jerkface. Good thing girls think wet shirts are sexy.”

William is still cracking up. “Dude, no offense, but you couldn't get a 6th grader to go with you. Not even an UGLY sixth grader. You're basically Urkel.”

“Clearly Urkel had girlfriends,” I rebut. “And Screech, and Uncle Joey from Full House. And the Rock, and the Avengers, and basically every heterosexual, and even most homosexual men, for that matter.” Willy is laughing so hard I feel like he's going to fall out of his rickety wooden auditorium chair. It's true; any guy with the right moves can get a lady. And clearly I am incredibly intelligent and uproarious, and while I might be on the scrawny side, my positive qualities are more than enough to interest the feminine gender. I just have to show off a little more. That's phase one.

The new 7th grade teacher whose name I can never remember and whose voice is way too high pitched announces the first act, and we are in full assembly mode. The dancers are up on the stage. They are horrible. These girls are offbeat, barely moving at all, total lack of enthusiasm.

I am highly offended. This is a disservice to Salt 'n Peppa. "Push it" has turned into "slightly nudge it." I cannot take it anymore. I should have signed up for dance instead of macaroni necklaces. If these hunnies in the audience could see my moves, I would have a prom date faster than Salt 'n Peppa can gyrate.

The audience is mundanely watching in fear of the wrath of Snidey. Girls like guys who have no fear, right? In the middle of the song, I leap onto my auditorium chair and start busting all of my moves. Go big or go home. Dougie, shimmy, Harlem Shake, big hip circles. The whole audience starts laughing and cheering, teachers too; even Snidey cracks a grin. When the song's over, I throw my arms up and the crowd goes wild.

The best part of being an Urkel? No consequences for my dance charade.

"Hey Macky," Zariah says and puts her arm around my shoulder. The prettiest girl in school is talking to me. Cha-ching!

"I thought that your...ahem...performance yesterday was awesome," Zariah says.

"Thanks," I manage. "Your dance was great too." *Your dance was great too?* How lame am I? I can't even manage a decent vocabulary word.

Zariah doesn't seem to care about my word choice, and she smiles. "I'd love to see more of those moves at the prom."

I figured I'd get attention from mediocre girls, not this beautiful goddess. I try to construct a decent prom proposal in my brain before verbalizing my-

"Zeee! Zeee! Zeee!" Tyler runs chanting and scoops up Zariah, little thing that she is, and starts careening down the hallway full throttle with her in his arms like a baby. Tyler and his moronic jock friends love to play hallway football with Zariah since she is the tiniest, cutest girl in the school.

CURSE YOU TYLER. You bumbling idiot. Clearly I am not big enough or strong enough or fast enough to rescue her from this display of athletic stupidity.

New Text Message:

To: Mom

You need to bring up hallway football at the PTA meetings. This hazard is ruining my learning environment.

"You mad, Bro?" Willy grins sarcastically.

"Willy, I'm going to kick your teeth down your throat if you don't shut up."

"INCONCEIVABLE!"

Despite my secret joy at his Princess Bride allusion, I deliver sweet chin music to William, roll my eyes and calculate the fastest route, anti-jock, to math class.

Prom is getting closer. Tomorrow in fact. No date. No date for Macky. What would The Rock do? He would wrestle himself a lady. Clearly not an option for skinny-elbowed me. The Avengers? They'd rescue someone from a burning building or something. No good there. Urkel would use his Boss Sauce and Transformation Chamber to turn into Stephan. I don't have the time for DNA alteration. I've already tried the Uncle Joey comedy approach. All that's left is Screech's super-lovey-come-on-too-strong, which is totally not my style. I'm out of plans.

School is over. I've hidden in the bathroom for too long and finally head to the quiet hallway to collect my books. I close my locker and bang my head against the metal repeatedly. This strategy has brought on epiphanies before; maybe it will work again. Metal, metal, metal, hand.

"OW! Macky!" Zariah whines. At least *her* whining is cute. "My fault. Shouldn't have put my hand there. You need to stop that though; you're going to desecrate that cerebrum."

Goddess with a vocabulary. Come on, cerebrum; prom proposal! PROM PROPOSAL!

Before I can concoct something smooth to say, Zariah turns and heads down the hallway. I hear her little heels clicking as she goes. Click- click- click- pause...

"Macky, wear yellow tomorrow," Zariah says authoritatively. "You're going to be my date." She doesn't wait for my reply, just click- click- clicks confidently down the hallway and out the door. Cha-ching!

New Text Message:

To: Mom

Go buy me a yellow bowtie and suspenders for prom. Also, need yellow wrist corsage. Tiny. Like doll-size.