

Third Place
Grades Nine/Ten

The Rapid Evolution from Dumpee to Dumper

by Madeline Woods

I guess my guy troubles started just before Homecoming. Well actually they probably started a lot sooner than that. Like, in eighth grade when I gave this note that was actually more of a poem to this guy I liked. Well actually I gave it to a friend who gave it to his friend who gave it to him. I've never really figured out why we do things like that. Especially in middle school. I was always amazed that anyone ever got into a relationship, and I use the word "relationship" very tentatively when describing girl-boy relations in middle school, because of how everyone acted like saying who you like was a social taboo and if they didn't like you back you would literally crumple up and die. Well anyway this guy I gave the note to couldn't figure out that it was me who wrote it even though to me it was blatantly obvious so I stopped liking him. Two years of obsessive crushing down the drain. My point is that I've never been very lucky when it comes to guys.

Yeah, and then Alex turned me down. Well I was kinda disappointed obviously. Heck, I was a wreck. And it wasn't like when you get a little peeved and you make a big deal out of it cause no one notices that anything is wrong. This was the "I'm so depressed that I'm trying really hard to hide it and I don't want to make a big deal out of it and please don't ask if I'm ok cause I might just burst out crying and bite your head off if you do." It was part of the reason I let Kylie set me up in the first place. I was just so mad at society and guys in general and I was annoyed that I was brave enough to go against the sexist high school dating norms and ask a guy out and then be turned down.

Well actually I gave him a note after third hour and told him to get back to me at lunch. I didn't put any gooey sentences on it or draw a bunch of pink hearts on it or anything. I just asked Alex if he wanted to go to homecoming and to tell me at lunch. God fourth hour was horrible. Especially since Kylie was sitting next to me and I made the mistake of telling her cause I was all giddy and excited. Big mistake. Cause then at lunch when Alex turned me down, I'm not going to go into the gory details not that he was mean about it or anything he was actually really nice but I still really don't like talking about it, anyway Kylie was glaring at him and then she *punched* him (just on the arm) even though I told her not to because Kylie never does anything you ask her to do because well, she's *Kylie*. I really should just stop giving notes to guys.

And Alex and I are still like really good friends now but I'm still a little like "seriously, you couldn't just go to Homecoming with me". He didn't even end up going to the dance, just to dinner with our friend group, which probably should have been awkward but it actually wasn't but it still

kinda ruined Homecoming and my birthday which was the next day. I spent the entire dance wishing that he was there, and wishing that I could ask him to dance, and wishing he hadn't turned me down. And then on my birthday I was all depressed because I was sixteen and had never been kissed before. Not that that actually even matters but you try telling that to a melodramatic sixteen year old girl. And yeah, I knew I was being melodramatic and all teen angsty and that really bugs me when other people are like that so then I felt like I was a hypocrite and that made me feel even worse. But Alex is a nice guy and we're still friends. So yeah. But it still kinda made me really insecure like I was "what's wrong with me???? Am I like grossly unattractive or am I just really annoying or do I just disgust you in some way?????" It didn't really help my already fragile teen psyche.

And then Kylie wanted to set me up. What I should have said when she first brought it up was "Thanks for the offer but NO." But instead I was more like "Um.... Ok?" and when you give Kylie an inch, God will she take a mile. Like if she's being really annoying and meddlesome and you snap at her she'll look at you like you are the most evil person on the planet and that she just can't possibly *believe* you just said that to her because she is the most innocent and wonderful person ever and she only does these things because she is such a good friend and she cares about you *so much* and she just can't even begin to imagine why you are being so *ungrateful*. And then if you don't immediately back track and apologize she'll start crying. She's really really *really* good at crying. Anyway you end up feeling awful and apologizing just to make her stop because honestly crying people freak me out. Especially when Kylie cries because she has these really big eyes and when she starts crying she doesn't sob or anything, she'll just *stare* at you while about a billion tears pour from her eyes.

And if her manipulative talents weren't bad enough she uses them to meddle. She loves to meddle. Like last year she set up two of my really good friends who like didn't even know each other and it actually worked so now she thinks she's Yental and gets involved in everyone's relationships. And I mean EVERYBODIES relationships. She's actually a really awesome person she's just a little too involved sometimes. Or most of the time.

Like when she's not screwing with my life she's super fun to be around. She's one of those people who just gets so excited about things that their enthusiasm kinda just seeps into your mind. And Kylie's like completely competitive, which can also get really annoying now that I think of it but that's not the point, because it makes for really fun Twister tournaments. And she's one of the most creative people I know and one of the most unique people I've ever met but she's unique without trying which makes her all the more amazing. My point is she's not all of the annoying meddlesome person she is in this story. She's just like that in this story. But she's not like that all the time. Just some of the time. Does that make sense?

Anyway against my better judgment I agreed to have lunch with this guy, Danny. And he was... Nice. But he's also really awkward and he seems like he's kinda a wimp and that he tries really

hard just to be different and honestly that type of person really bugs me. Because seriously if you have to try hard to set yourself apart from the crowd then is there anything that's actually interesting about you? But he's really nice. But he's really Christian which in itself doesn't bother me in the slightest but it really annoyed me that he asked if I was Christian before he met me because that really doesn't seem like something you need to know about someone before you meet them especially in High School. And the whole thing was just really uncomfortable. And I really probably should have expected awkward cause, well, Kylie refers to him as "Awkward Danny". So yeah, just not my type.

But after that he kept texting me. Like nothing over the top at all we just talked a little about writing and stuff. But I always let it trail off because I really didn't want to lead him on or anything and I kinda just wanted him to stop texting me. And then when he asked me if I wanted to hang out I'd always say I was busy. In my defense I really was busy. I had track practice and homework for four accelerated classes. If I really wanted to hang out with him I really probably could have made time but I really didn't actually want to. Like if Alex asked me out to coffee I would probably reply "YES!!!!!!!" in a heartbeat but I just kinda got faintly annoyed every time Danny asked to hang out and thought of all the other stuff I would rather be doing. So like finally I just ignored him and I was really hoping that he would take a hint but apparently he didn't since he texted me back like two days later asking if I was busy. And of course I told him I was and then he texted me back "When would be good for you?"

And how was I supposed to reply to that! He didn't give me any easy way to get out of it. I could have said "Never" but I'm really not a mean person and that seemed really mean and it wasn't like I could ignore it cause I already replied to his other text so it was obvious that I had my phone with me and it wasn't like I could say "I'm going to be busy for all of eternity". The guy had me in a flippin corner! And to make matters worse the only thing I could concentrate on was plotting Kylie's murder which was extremely entertaining but completely unhelpful. It's a really good thing I actually like Kylie most of the time.

Finally I just called Danny and told him I wasn't interested. And again I really don't want to get into the details. It was the most completely painfully awkward thing I've ever had to do before. How do you tell someone who you hung out with two weeks before during a thirty minute lunch period that you don't want to be in a relationship with them or really even get to know them because there were a lot of better things you could do with your time. I know that sounds completely horrible but it's true. And trust me it sounds ten times worse when you're telling it to someone over the phone. I had to break up with a guy who I had known for like less than a month and I haven't even had my first kiss yet! Aren't you supposed to be in a relationship before you actually have to break up with someone?

I guess this is what I get for putting myself out there. Like it really annoys me how there are girls who never have to step out of their turtle shells but guys still like them and they can find guys

who they like back without trying very hard or being the least bit uncomfortable but apparently I don't have a pretty enough turtle shell or whatever to like get guys who actually like me to ask me out. According to Kylie it's just because they are all scared of me because I'm smart and have strong opinions about stuff but that doesn't really make me feel all that better. Actually it kinda makes me feel worse. Who wants to be the girl who scares all of the guys away? Like why can't I find a smart guy with strong opinions who actually likes me? And I'm not going to spend all of my time waiting for a guy to sweep me off my feet but not waiting didn't seem to work out all that well either. Oh well, there are more important things than boyfriends anyway.

I think I should just stay away from guys for a while. They're just not worth the trouble.

