1-1-2011

The Most Awkward Boy in the World

Lynn S. Jorden
Gettysburg College, jordly01@cnrav.gettysburg.edu
Class of 2011

Follow this and additional works at: http://cupola.gettysburg.edu/mercury

Part of the Nonfiction Commons

Share feedback about the accessibility of this item.

Available at: http://cupola.gettysburg.edu/mercury/vol2011/iss1/15

This open access nonfiction is brought to you by The Cupola: Scholarship at Gettysburg College. It has been accepted for inclusion by an authorized administrator of The Cupola. For more information, please contact cupola@gettysburg.edu.
The Most Awkward Boy in the World

**Keywords**
creative writing, non-fiction

**Author Bio**
Lynn Jorden is a senior Political Science major and Writing minor from Cheyenne, Wyoming. After graduation she hopes to either work for a member of Congress or go out on the campaign trail. She is a former president of College Democrats and is also involved in theatre. Her favorite things include sharks, Mystery Science Theatre 3000, and the United States Senate, especially the quorum calls.

This nonfiction is available in The Mercury: [http://cupola.gettysburg.edu/mercury/vol2011/iss1/15](http://cupola.gettysburg.edu/mercury/vol2011/iss1/15)
I've only ever dated one boy. His name was Tom, and I met him at an anime convention, which I'm sure for you will carry its own implications. He was tall though, and he had his own driver's license. I was only fourteen. I just couldn't resist.

He sat next to me during the costume contest and held his arm around me when we watched fan-made videos. We exchanged e-mail addresses that weekend—the social mark of the nerd. He lived almost an hour and a half away from where I lived, so it would be our chief means of communication. Never once did I question why he didn't give me his number, or why I didn't give him mine. But we e-mailed back and forth, like people do.

One day I opened an email from him and it said, "I'm so glad I have a girlfriend like you." I was confused. I had thought he was kind of cute at the convention but our conversations had been pretty much limited to school goings-on and movies we had recently seen.

Well, okay, I thought. I've never had a boyfriend before. Maybe this will be fun.

So I replied back with, "I'm glad I have a boyfriend like you, too."

Ostensibly, we were boyfriend and girlfriend. We hadn't seen each other since the weekend we met at the convention, and yet he routinely wrote long-winded, heaving messages of love to me—how we would meet someday under the falling cherry blossom petals, how he ached to hold my hand in his, how he wished he could see me in the light of the moon.

It was pretty weird.

I never really knew how to respond, so I usually just sort of half-heartedly echoed his sentiments in my own words. I was secretly glad we lived far away—that way I didn't have to actually physically be with him. One might ask, if he was so repelling, why didn't I just break up with him? I asked myself that question several times, both during and after the "relationship", but my guess is that I liked getting to insert random "I was talking to my boyfriend..." and "my boyfriend is..." in conversations with my friends at my all-girls school. It shot my social status up a couple rungs, and that was worth everything.

After a year of e-mail communication passed, I figured it was probably time to see him again. So when he invited me to Arlington Heights for his homecoming dance, I accepted. I wore a purple dress, he wore what I
can only assume was his father’s suit from the way it fit him. We drove to his high-school in a big Buick with heated seats, something he was keen to display for me. My ass was broiling by the time we arrived at his high school. We had to park in the shopping center opposite, and as we prepared to cross the road, I tripped over a crack in the asphalt, characteristically awkward in my heels. He caught me, and from that point on, I think he fancied himself rather suave.

The dance was fine. Rather long and boring, but they had some pretty good crudités, so I gnawed on celery sticks while sitting on Tom’s lap (his idea, not mine). We didn’t even really dance. It was incredibly awkward.

After the dance, we ambled back across the road to the shopping center parking lot. Instead of going back to the car, however, Tom took my hand and led me toward the Dunkin Donuts. I was excited; I thought we were going to get a donut before going home. Sadly he didn’t lead me inside the store, but to the little alley in back of it.

The streetlamp cast a cold white glow over the alley, illuminating the dumpster and the cigarette butts that littered the sidewalk. I pulled my coat tighter around myself, partly because I was cold and partly because I wanted something to do that wasn’t just standing silently. Tom took off his “suit” jacket and put it around my shoulders. His dress shirt fit him even worse than I realized.

He looked around the alley contemplatively and said, attempting to be nonchalant:

“This is where a lot of people make out.”

I looked around at the trash and the scrubby plants growing out of the asphalt. Really? This is where people make out? In the alley behind the Dunkin Donuts?

“Oh yeah?” I said, blinking around.

“Yup,” he replied, rocking back on his heels.

It suddenly hit me that he was basically asking me to join the ranks of those people. We had not kissed yet, and therefore, I had not kissed anybody, ever. Although I yearned for that day, I did not want my first kiss to be in some dank alleyway, so I took evasive action.

“Well, shall we go?” I said, gesturing rather exaggeratedly back to the parking lot.

“Oh, um, yeah, okay,” Tom said, shoving his hands in his pockets. He looked disappointed.

We got in the car and I threw his suit jacket into the back seat. I peered out the window, picked at my nails, trying to do anything but look at Tom as he settled into his seat.

I looked back at him, innocently.

“Ready?” I said.

“Yup,” he said. “I had fun tonight.”

“Me too,” I said.
He then leaned over the gearshift and hugged me. I reciprocated, twisting my spine in some awkward position so I didn’t get crushed against the passenger side window. I could slightly feel him trying to shift his face so it was in front of my face, but I kept my ground and refused to turn my head.

“I can’t breathe!” I laughed, half-joking.

“Haha, o—okay,” he said, pulling back. I quickly looked back out the window, and we drove off back towards his house for a brief snack before he would drive me home.

Once in his house, he took me down to his basement. It consisted of an old plaid couch in front of an even older TV set, some sort of wood-paneled divider, and then a whole area filled with boxes. He decided not to turn on the light for some reason, so we sat next to each other on the couch in the darkness, the only light coming from the top of the basement stairs.

I munched on the apple he had given me as a post-homecoming dance snack, trying to avoid his gaze. I could feel the couch shift as he tried to move closer to me. I prayed he wouldn’t try anything.

But of course, he did. He snaked his hand onto my thigh and rested it.

I stared at it, horrified. Was I supposed to let this happen? Was this the natural progression of hugging? If I let this fly, what was he going to do next?

So I took a firm stance.

“Hey, um...don’t do that,” I muttered.

“Oh, sorry, sorry, sorry,” he stammered, yanking his hand off of my thigh.

We sat there together in silence for about seven minutes, me eating my apple, him sitting there and trying not to look at me.

“Well, I should probably be getting home,” I said when I had finished.

“Yeah, I guess so,” he said, standing.

After a near-silent hour and a half ride home, I stood with Tom on my doorstep, ready to end this night of bizarrity and awkwardness.

“Thanks for inviting me,” I said, readying my key in the door.

“Thanks for coming,” he said.

And then, bless him, he went for it. His mouth hurtled towards my face and I only had a split-second to take action. So I shifted my head to the side and converted it to a hug instead. A very strange hug where I could feel his lips through the back of my dress.

After what seemed like an impossibly long time, we pulled away from each other. I began the goodbye process.

“Well—”

“Could I get a soda or something?” he interrupted.

If I could have physically manifested what I was feeling, I would’ve
heaved the loudest, most dramatically exasperated sigh ever.

“Sure,” I said, opening my front door. I led him inside and offered him a selection of sodas from the garage. He took a Pepsi and stood in my kitchen as I busied myself with refilling the ice cube tray.

“Can I see your room?” he said.

I internally did another dramatically exasperated sigh, and said “Sure.” We tip-toed upstairs, as my family was asleep, and I let him inside my room.

“Nice,” he said, surveying it.

“Thanks.”

“I like your guitar,” he said, gesturing to my Ibanez GAX 70. “Will you play something for me?”

“I can’t,” I said immediately. “You know, family’s sleeping and everything. It’d be too loud.”

He nodded, taking in this somehow novel concept. He then thought it appropriate to lie down on my bed—shoes on, by the way—and test the tensile strength of the mattress by bouncing up and down.

“Comfortable bed,” he said with a smile.

“Um...thank you,” I said by way of reply. I couldn’t wait to go to sleep on it as soon as he got out of my house.

He lay there for a few minutes, looking up at the ceiling and all around my room, before I took strategic action.

“Well, it’s getting late, and I’m pretty tired...”

“Oh, yeah,” he said, getting up from the bed. “I should probably go, I guess.”

I led him downstairs and walked him back out to his car.

“Well, goodnight,” I said.

“Goodnight.”

He leaned in for yet another kiss, which I deftly turned into another hug. We kind of laughed that awkward laugh when you don’t really know what else to do, and pulled away again.

“G—goodnight”, he muttered, and got into his car.

I felt the stress rush out of me as his car turned out of my driveway.

We didn’t actually break up until about six months later, but that night was emblematic of the whole of our relationship: pure, unfiltered awkwardness. Sometimes I feel embarrassed that I didn’t actually get my first kiss until I was nineteen, but looking back at that night, I feel like having it then, at fourteen, under those circumstances, would be an even greater embarrassment.