



## 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Best of the Best, Round 2

### Popping

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A window pops up. My heart jumps. It's Megan Williams. Drop-dead gorgeous. I read, "Hey, How r u?"

My hands shake as I type, "Pretty good!"

The usual IM conversation that consisted of "nothing", "bored" and other pointless use of a computer's physical memory was not where I wanted this to go.

My left hand grabs my right wrist to steady it as I use the hunt-and-peck typing method. Slowly a message forms. "Do u have a date 2nite?"

Her reply sends shivers down my spine and I enter a sort of floating dimension. My hand moves automatically at this response.

"Nope."

Nope. A wonderful word. A window, get out of jail free card, a chance, heart hits 130 ppm, hands fluid, remarkable, daring.

"Would u like to go 2 da dance wit me?"

Scared, afraid she'll say yes, afraid she'll say no, afraid she'll just laugh.

Hand shakes, steadying slowly, moon orbiting large planet, jittery.

"Let me check my schedule."

Please say yes, please say no, tiny speck in whole universe, heart still beating, perspiration dripping, anxiety peaks, top of rollercoaster.

"Um... sorry, but I have 2 babysit 2nite. Sorry."

I understand. No, I don't. Why? Is it me? Is it the way I dress? Do I have bad breath? Too geeky? Perhaps not even a speck— nothing at all? Rollercoaster turns into a tiny hill.

My head lowers and hits the keyboard, yanking me out of this state. Humiliated, I quickly type a hasty goodbye, trying not to be rude. My computer whines as I power down.

A door slams and I walked downstairs. Mom sees my depressed face.



"Honey, don't look so glum. I know you can't go to the dance tonight, but I invited one of your friends over to keep you company."

A telephone conversation comes to mind. I feel better. I wouldn't be able to go anyway.

"I looked through your IM archives. I was going to invite Jeff, but he was busy. I saw you talking about a girl. Megan W... something. So I invited her. Is that okay?"

I looked up in shock. Megan was in on this conspiracy? "Thanks, Mom."

"A Momma always knows."

It's funny how much you can say in an IM, even to those you don't mean to tell. Thanks to that, I have another window, an opening, a chance to ask her out.

Windows can pop up everywhere.