

Crushes, Cookies, and Other Parts of Teen Life



**RT and Stories For DDF
or Classroom Use**

Lynn Lovegreen

Dedicated to Katy, Shawn, and all the DDF students and coaches out there.

You are special. We need your light in this world.

This is a free booklet designed for students to use for DDF (Drama, Debate, and Forensics) or similar speech and interpretive activities. Teachers are also welcome to use these materials in the classroom. I only ask that you acknowledge the title and author of each piece.

All text written by Lynn Lovegreen

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“The Makeover” by Lynn Lovegreen

Madison:

Finally, lunch hour. My stomach was rumbling like an eight-point earthquake as we sat down at the cafeteria table. I chomped into my lukewarm school pizza.

Ava whispered, “Omigod, look who’s coming this way!”

I glanced up. Ethan and one of his friends headed toward us. I froze as my pulse slammed into overdrive. My eyes slid from his adorable mop of hair to his clear skin to the cotton shirt that hinted at muscles underneath. Plus, he was one of the kindest people I knew. He was nice to everyone, and always said just the right thing when I was having a bad day.

Ava interrupted my review of Ethan’s cuteness with a “Geez, Madison, at least close your mouth.”

My jaw snapped shut, leaving a string of pizza cheese between my lips and the plate. My cheeks burned. Ethan looked my way and smiled, catching me at my dorkiest. Great. He was probably laughing at my idiocy. “Just shoot me now,” I murmured. Too late, but I wiped my mouth with a paper napkin.

The guys sat two tables away. His friend said something and punched his arm, but Ethan’s one-thousand-watt smile remained. The voltage shot through my veins when his eyes met mine.

I wondered what it would be like to date him. Would Ethan be as chill as he was in class, or would it feel weird to see him outside of school? I'd pay a million dollars to find out.

"You really like him," Ava observed.

"Duh. But a guy like him wouldn't be interested in someone like me."

"Sure he would, with a little help." Her eyes pored over my athleisure T-shirt and sweatpants. She sucked her teeth. "Come over tonight, and we'll see what we can do."

Ethan:

"Dude, Madison's way into you. Either that, or she stares at all the wimpy guys," Chris said.

I reached out like I was going to punch my buddy's shoulder. He pulled away. But my gaze was still glued to Madison. She had the prettiest brown eyes. Her low-maintenance vibe and sense of humor made her the best person to sit next to in class. My shoulders hunched forward when she looked away. "Nah, she's probably into jocks like the rest of this school."

Chris picked up his burger and paused. "You're good at basketball. Just gotta dress the part. Stop by after school, and we'll raid my brother's closet."

I shook my head. "Isn't he six-foot-one?"

"So? They wear everything baggy nowadays."

I bit into my cheeseburger and chewed instead of answering him.

Chris leaned toward me. “You can’t win if you don’t enter. Right, bro?”

Something told me it was a dumb idea. But Chris had better luck in the romance department than I did. Maybe I should go along with this.

Madison:

Ava was ready for me when I got to her house that night, half her closet empty and clothes laid out on her bed. She pursed her lips. “I’m thinking boho, or artsy.”

“Really?” I was neither of those.

“Have you seen the stickers on his notebook? He likes indie bands. Maybe we should go for a Coachella look. How about this?” She held up a short denim skirt and a skimpy camisole.

I shook my head. “I don’t think so.”

“Or this?” She picked up a pink mini dress.

“I am not showing that much skin.”

“You want him to notice you, dontcha?” She shook her head like I was the problem.

“Okay, let’s take it down a notch. How about jeans and a nice top?”

I held a pair of jeans up to my body. “Maybe. You’re sure this is absolutely necessary?”

“Yes, and you’d look good in those. Maybe a little makeup?”

I made a face. I hadn’t worn makeup since the eyeshadow disaster last year.

“Just a bit of eyeliner and lip gloss. Trust me.”

I sighed. “Okay, but you are not touching my hair.” I had to claim something under my control, before Ava took her fairy godmother act into full pumpkin mode.

Ethan:

Chris’ brother grunted his okay with letting us go through his clothes. Chris pulled out a bunch of basketball shorts and T-shirts from the dresser. “These are brand-new. And those colors would look good on you.”

“Hmmm.” I wasn’t convinced, but I picked out a few things that might not be too big.

“You’ll slay in that,” Chris said. “Come on, try them on for us.”

“No way, too weird,” I said. “I am not reenacting some rom-com scene for you.”

Chris laughed. “Okay, bro. But promise me you’ll wear some of it tomorrow.”

“Deal.” I left with a bag of clothes and shoes in my hand.

Madison:

The next morning, I wore Ava’s peasant blouse and a tight pair of distressed jeans to school. I stood behind the door of my locker, pulling on the jeans so I could breathe.

“You look beautiful!” Ava hugged me. “Now let’s go to the bathroom so I can help you with the makeup.”

I bit my lip and let her lead me there. It was worth it if it got Ethan’s attention, right?
“Just a little, remember?”

“Okay, just a touch of eye pencil and a little lip color.”

By the time I was back at my locker, a mix of confidence and nerves buzzing in my chest, I had to admit I looked good in the mirror. But I didn’t feel totally like me, either. Did I overdo it? What would Ethan think?

Ethan:

That morning, I walked into school in baggy shorts, a purple and gold T-shirt, and shoes three sizes too big for me named after a zillionaire athlete. I scrunched up my toes so the shoes wouldn’t fall off when I picked up my feet.

Chris’s face burst into a grin when he saw me. “Hey! You look great. She’ll love it.”

I shot him a look. He was enjoying this way too much. “She’d better. I feel like a bad clothes advertisement.”

“In a good way.” He gave me a high five.

I stopped dead in my tracks when I caught sight of Madison at her locker, decked out in a peasant shirt and faded jeans. Was that makeup on her face? I bit my lip. What happened to my sporty girl?

Chris shoved me forward. “Here’s your chance. Go for it. See ya later.”

Madison’s eyes grew wide as she studied me from head to toe. “Hey, Ethan. What’s up?”

I shuffled toward her to make sure the shoes would stay on. “Hey. So, what’s with the uh, new outfit?”

Her cheeks turned pink. “Trying to impress someone.” A hint of a smile lit up her face. “And what about you?”

“Um, me too.” My nerves shot off like firecrackers. Was she into me after all? Or was I reading the room wrong? I moved closer, trying not to stumble. “This someone. Could it be someone I know?”

She chuckled. “Someone you know very well.”

I shook my head. “Well, you didn’t have to change anything for my sake.”

Madison sidled next to me as she grinned. “Same here.”

My heart beat double-time. “You’re perfect just the way you are.”

“Took the words right out of my mouth.”

I could’ve floated out of the sneakers.

Madison twirled a strand of hair between her fingers. “So, whatcha doing this weekend?”

“Hanging out with you. But can we ditch the borrowed clothes first?”

She laughed. “Great idea. Let’s change and meet back here. We can walk to class together.”

“Awesome. See you soon.” All I had to change into was my gym shirt and sweatpants. But I knew she wouldn’t care. We’d proved that this morning.

“Don’t Trust Anyone Over Thirty” by Lynn Lovegreen

So far, the only good thing about Alaska was the views. Sprawled out on the couch with my guitar, I stared out the window at craggy, snow-capped mountains. A Jimi Hendrix song wailed through my ear pods, and I tried to keep up with the chords. If a genie gave me one wish, I’d ask to play like Jimi.

My mom dragged me up here a week ago, and high school wouldn’t start for months. No teens in sight—they were all fishing, or whatever they did in the summer here. Who knew if I could find anyone as cool as my California friends? The only people I’d met so far were my mom’s boss and the next-door neighbors, all of whom were middle-aged. I smirked as I remembered what they used to say in the 60s, don’t trust anyone over thirty. It’d be so cool to live back then, going to rock concerts and flower power rallies.

The doorbell rang, jarring me out of Jimi’s solo. “Can you get that?” Mom called over the espresso machine.

Sighing like I’d lost my best friend, which I kind of had since they were back home, I dragged myself off the couch and to the door.

By the time I got there, the delivery guy had returned to his van. I picked up the box on the doormat and noticed that somebody else’s name was on it. I waved. “Wait!” But it was too late—the driver was already down the street.

Mom came up behind me. “Who was it?”

“A delivery. They left a package at the wrong address.”

“Oh.” Mom read the name over my shoulder, “Sondra Lyons. Same street name, shouldn’t be far from here.”

I turned to catch one of her “great idea” smiles stretch across her broad cheeks. Oh no. My jaw clenched even before she opened her mouth. “You can find the place and drop it off for them. Good excuse to get out of the house for a little while.”

I shook my head. “You’re always wanting to meet new people. You could do it.”

“No, this job has your name on it.” She took my vintage denim jacket off the coat hook and handed it to me. “It’s a nice day. You can deliver it and take a walk at the same time.”

“It’s raining.”

“Just a sprinkle. You won’t melt.”

No matter what I said, Mom wouldn’t take no for an answer. Five minutes later, I stood in our driveway, box in hand. A raven laughed at me from a spruce tree.

If I were going with a friend, this would be an adventure. But alone, it was a chore. I trudged down the street past a mix of old and new houses while the rain darkened my jeans jacket. It was older than I am, so a little water wouldn’t hurt it. But my cold, wet feet made me wish I’d worn shoes instead of my old hippie sandals.

I found the house about a block away. Next to a rutted gravel driveway, an old log cabin nestled between two clumps of birch trees. The grass in the yard hadn’t been mowed in this decade.

I gulped as a shiver slid down my spine. I knew nothing about this person. Maybe she was a drug dealer, or a murderer. I really shouldn’t do this alone.

I hurried back down the street and barged through our front door.

“How was it?” Mom looked up from her day planner. “Oh, couldn’t find it?”

“Nah, I did, but decided it wasn’t a good idea to go to a stranger’s house alone. What if they’re sketchy, or a serial killer?”

Mom pursed her lips. “You watch too many horror movies. Okay, I’ll come with you.”

I huffed. “Why do I have to go?”

“You can protect me from the chain-saw. Come on.” Mom pushed me outside and locked the front door.

The rain had stopped. I dragged my feet as we walked around the mud puddles in the street.

“It’s over there.” I pointed.

Mom grinned at the log cabin. “Oh, isn’t it cute? Like something out of a movie.”

I quirked my mouth. “Glad you’re enjoying this. But it doesn’t look like Sondra Lyons gets many visitors.”

“Maybe she’d like some, then.” Mom grabbed my arm and marched us up to the house. I stuffed my hands in my pockets as she knocked on the door.

“Maybe they’re not home.” I took a step backward, hoping we’d leave the box on the doorstep, and I could get back to my music.

No luck.

A lady with long white hair and wrinkles lining her face answered the door. Scarves cascaded from around her neck to her long India-print skirt. “Hello. Can I help you?”

Mom offered the package. “Hi, we just moved in down the street. The delivery guy left this at our house by mistake. Are you Sondra?”

“Yes, welcome to the neighborhood!” Sondra took the box and opened the door wider. “Please, come in.”

“Thanks.” Mom stepped forward before I could open my mouth. We kicked off our wet footgear, and Sondra ushered us inside while Mom made the usual introductions.

My jaw dropped at the sight of Sondra’s living room. A worn leather couch and chairs took up the most space, but what drew my attention were the strings of beads covering the hall doorway, the lava lamps in the corners, and the ‘60s concert posters covering the walls.

I drifted toward a Janis Joplin one, Art Nouveau style in vivid colors featuring a red-headed lady in a flowing robe. “Are these the real thing?”

“Yes, I lived in San Francisco back then.”

Mom chuckled. “What a coincidence! We just moved here from The City.”

Sondra said, “Best place to live, except for Alaska. Can I get you some tea? I just made a pot.”

“Sure!” Mom plopped down on the couch like they’d been BFFs all their lives.

I moved on to the next poster. “Wow, it’s Jimi.” Hendrix and his crew stood out in purple against a bright yellow background. My eyes drank in the details so I could tell my bestie about it later.

“It sure is.” Sondra handed me a pottery-made mug. The scent of mint tickled my nose.
“A night I’ll never forget.”

I almost dropped my tea. “You were there? You saw him in person?”

She nodded. “In Golden Gate Park. He was on fire that day, just fantastic.”

My ribs squeezed tight. “I wish I could’ve seen him.”

She indicated my tie-dye T-shirt. “I think you would’ve fit right in. Sounds like you’re a 60s music fan, too.”

I hopped up on my toes. “Best bands ever.”

Mom called from the couch, “And a guitar player.”

My cheeks burned. “I’m not very good.”

“Yet,” Mom added. “Only been playing a couple years.”

Sondra gestured for me to have a seat. “Have a cookie. Acoustic or electric?”

I sat next to Mom and took a chocolate chip cookie from a plate on the coffee table. “I have an acoustic, saving up for an electric.” The tension dropped away from my shoulders as I grinned. “My mom’s not thrilled with that idea, but they make headphones, right?” I took a bite of cookie—just enough chocolate and butter.

“That’s true.” Sondra nodded. “When I started, my parents weren’t enthusiastic, either.”

My eyes bugged out. “You play, too?”

“I do. We’ll have to have a jam session some time.”

I kept my face neutral, but my body leaned forward. “Maybe.”

Sondra waved at the Janis Joplin poster. “Janis was really fun and down to earth. So sad that the heroin got hold of her. Happens a lot with musicians. Let that be a lesson to you, stay away from drugs.”

Mom raised her eyebrows at me, clearly pleased that Sondra was a hippie but not a druggie.

We sipped our tea while Sondra told us stories about way back when. “Jefferson Airplane was huge in San Francisco. Grace Slick was the perfect lead singer for them, what an original voice. Her stage presence was magnetic. I met her a few times over the years, but we didn’t hang out together. Did you know she’s also a painter?”

Mom cleared her throat. “I hate to break this up, but we should be going. I have a Zoom call I can’t miss.”

I stood as my heart sank into the soles of my feet.

Sondra tilted her head. “Well, all right. But stop by any time. I haven’t shown you my Stratocaster or my vinyl collection yet.”

“Really?” I stifled the urge to hug her.

As we walked back to our house, my mind was in Golden Gate Park, seeing Jimi Hendrix live. His guitar echoed in my head. I had a zillion questions to ask Sondra.

Mom nudged me. “Not so bad after all, huh?”

I shrugged, not wanting to admit she was right. “Nah. Is it okay if I go see her later?”

“Of course.”

Here I thought I’d never find a friend in this town. And to top it off, she was way over thirty.

Readers Theater: “Thespian Support Group” by Lynn Lovegreen

Cast:

LEE: Moderator, trying to keep it on track but has acting bug too

MARIA: spouts trivia about plays and movies

JADE: speaks with British accent

WILL: bursts into song

CRASH: Dramatic Interpretation emo

LEE: Welcome to the Thespian Support Group. We have a new person today, so let’s introduce ourselves. I’m Lee, and I’m the moderator.

MARIA: I’m Maria—

WILL: (sings) The most beautiful sound I ever heard—

LEE: Now, Will, there’s a place and a time for singing, and this is not it. Let Maria finish her thought.

MARIA: I’m Maria, and I’m a thespian. This is my first meeting.

LEE, JADE, WILL, CRASH: Hi, Maria.

WILL (sings) Maria, Maria, Maria.

MARIA: *West Side Story*, Jerome Robbins, Leonard Bernstein, Stephen Sondheim and Arthur Laurents, 1957. And you have a nice voice, Will.

LEE: Please don't encourage him. Next person.

JADE: My name is Inigo Montoya.

MARIA, JADE, WILL, CRASH: You killed my father. Prepare to die.

MARIA: *The Princess Bride*, William Goldman, 1987.

JADE: Sorry, couldn't resist. Hi, I'm Jade, and I'm a thespian.

LEE, MARIA, WILL, CRASH: Hi, Jade.

WILL: Hello, I'm Will, and I'm a thespian.

LEE, MARIA, JADE, CRASH: Hi, Will.

MARIA: Like Will Shakespeare. Very cool.

WILL: Yeah, theater's in my blood. My mom and dad met in a production of *Romeo and Juliet*.

MARIA: I love that play! My favorite movie version is Franco Zefferelli's, with Leonard Whiting and Olivia Hussey, 1968.

WILL: (sings from the soundtrack) What is a youth?

LEE: Next person.

CRASH: Hi, I'm Crash, and I'm a thespian. I love emoting.

LEE: All right, all right, let's get back to our support group agenda. Today's topic is building social connections outside of your drama friends.

JADE: There's always a lot of drama with my friends. They're teenagers.

CRASH: Teens can be so harsh. Mean girls. Romantic break ups. Cyber bullying.

WILL: Crash is set to win first place in DI in the next DDF tournament.

CRASH: The thrill of applause and the agony of rejection! I love Dramatic Interp, don't you?

MARIA: The gloom and doom competition?

CRASH: The height of emotions event!

JADE: DI's an awesome event. I prefer the heartbreak and emotional triumph stories over the abuse and death stories, myself. But you do you.

CRASH: My specialty is the overcoming obstacles story. (strikes a pose) My first love ended in heartache and woe. I have survived a massive earthquake and tsunami that wiped out my hometown. And my teddy bear got run over by a bus. But I will go on!

MARIA, JADE, and WILL applaud.

LEE: That's enough drama. Not what I meant. Let's get back to today's subject. We're talking about building social connections outside of your acting friends.

WILL: But isn't everyone acting on some level? Like they act happy when they're sad. (sings)
Smile, when your heart is breaking—

MARIA: "Smile" by Charlie Chaplin, 1936.

JADE: Did you know Chaplin was English?

LEE: Back to my topic—

CRASH: Why should we have to act like we're dull, ordinary people when we're not?

JADE: We must be ourselves, and live our own lives.

MARIA: I love your accent. Just like King Arthur's in —

JADE: It is I, Arthur, Son of Uther Pendragon, from the castle of Camelot. King of the Britons, defeater of the Saxons, sovereign of all England.

MARIA: *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*, Terry Gilliam and Terry Jones, 1975.

WILL (sings) Always look on the bright side of life.

CRASH: (dances and whistles the tune)

LEE: Hey, wasn't that song from *Spamalot*? (growing more annoyed) Now you've got me doing it. Cut it out.

MARIA: Eric Idle, John DuPrez, Neil Innes, 2005. It's the musical version of the movie, so I think it works.

WILL: Thanks.

LEE: As recovering thespians, we're learning how to live without constant references to plays and movies, and how to relate to people outside of our thespian circles.

WILL: That sounds boring.

CRASH: Dreary, humdrum, colorless, uninspiring.

LEE: It's not boring, it's, it's....

JADE: That's why my family keeps sending me here, so I can relate to normal people. But I miss being a thespian. They're all a little kooky, but isn't that part of the fun?

LEE: Fun, yes. Fun. Let's talk about that. There are many ways to have fun, like playing games.

CRASH: Charades!

WILL: (mimes as the others guess)

MARIA: Six words.

JADE: A play.

MARIA: *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*! Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber, 1968!

WILL: (sings) A crash of drums, a flash of light, my golden coat flew out of sight!

LEE: Knock it off! Not what I'm talking about. Back to today's discussion topic. Um, other games like sports, or outdoor activities. How about walking or going on hikes?

WILL (sings) The hills are alive—

MARIA: *The Sound of Music*—

LEE: Stop! Okay, that's it. I'm done. Find yourself another moderator.

JADE: You don't really mean that, Lee.

WILL: (sings) You'll be back, Soon you'll see, You'll remember you belong to me.

MARIA: *Hamilton*, Lin Manuel Miranda, 2015.

LEE: Augh!

JADE: There's nothing wrong with adding a little joy to the world.

LEE: Nothing really. But sometimes it's better to fit in, act like other people.

WILL: Other people sing and talk about movies and stuff.

LEE: But not like we do. I mean, you do.

JADE: But what's wrong with that? Shouldn't we all be free to express ourselves?

CRASH: Express our feelings.

WILL: Yeah. Just relax and let yourself be. (sings) Let it go—

MARIA: *Frozen*, Jennifer Lee and Chris Buck, 2013.

WILL, JADE, MARIA, CRASH: Let it go, let it go

LEE joins: Can't hold back anymore, Let it go, let it go, Turn away and slam the door.

JADE: That's the spirit.

CRASH: Didn't that feel good?

MARIA: See, isn't that better than holding it all in, trying to be like everyone else?

LEE: I, uh....

WILL: Being a thespian is about letting go.

MARIA: About happiness.

CRASH: About delight, bliss, ecstasy.

JADE: About enjoying life. You can't argue with that, can you?

LEE: I suppose not....

CRASH: Lee, you're the only moderator who really gets us.

MARIA: The only one.

JADE: Two, three, four—

WILL, MARIA, JADE, CRASH: One, singular expression, every little step she takes, one, thrilling combination, every move that she makes.

LEE joins in: One smile and suddenly nobody else will do, You know you'll never be lonely with you-know-who, One moment in her presence and you can forget the rest, For the girl is second best to none, son, Oooh! Sigh! Give her your attention, Do I really have to mention she's the one.

ALL: *A Chorus Line*, Michael Bennett, Marvin Hamlisch, Edward Kleban, James Kirkwood Jr., Nicholas Dante, 1975.

CRASH: I love you guys!

(All take a bow)