

NOTES

In her fantasy-inspired short story, Celeste LeBeaux introduces us to a teenage girl preparing for the upcoming Junior High Winter Formal Dance; however, with no male role model to turn to, she enlists the help from a most unlikely source: Her brother's *G.I. Joe* action-figure! If performed by an older looking performer, the words "Junior High" may be eliminated; therefore, the performer may simply refer to the upcoming dance as a Winter Formal. This humorous short story should be performed by a female and may be entered in either Prose Interpretation or Humorous Interpretation. Performers are encouraged to really distinguish between the two characters both vocally and physically, as well as give each character a specific focal point when delivering each character's dialogue. Invest a little time and research the character traits of the iconic action figure. This is a challenging, comedic selection, and most likely will appeal to a variety of audiences. Much of the humor derives from 'how' the heroine of the story reacts to the advice given by 'Joe.' If used in Prose Interpretation, the drama mask icons are simply visible to show the performer when to turn the pages in the manuscript.

I'm dating Joe.

That's right; I'm dating Joe—as in *G.I. Joe*.

Okay, technically we're not 'dating.' Twice a week, however, while my little brother, Colton, goes to Cub Scouts, I sneak into my brother's room, take Joe off of my brother's dresser and whisk him away from his Fraternity brothers, a.k.a. Stretch Armstrong, three Batman action figures, two Supermans, and a slightly damaged Justin Bieber doll. Don't ask. I guess you could say that I'm practicing for the upcoming Junior High Winter Formal Dance.



I first noticed Joe, as I burst into Colton's room looking for my Secret Diary. It's no *secret* that my little brother likes nothing more than to steal my diary from my room, as often as he can, and hide it somewhere in the house. As I was rummaging through Colton's dresser drawers, I suddenly felt like I was being watched. I decided I'd pretend to be preoccupied with all of the mismatched socks in one of the drawers, when I quickly looked on top of the dresser and noticed Colton's *G.I. Joe*. He was standing at attention and staring at me.

"Are you on a secret mission?" he asked.

"If by a secret mission, you mean searching for a stolen Secret Diary? Then, yes! Yes, I am!" I responded.



It was then *G.I. Joe* offered his services. "You do realize I am the only one in

this household equipped for such a mission, don't you? The name's G.I. Joe, but since you're a civilian, you can just call me Joe."

Hesitantly, I inquired, "So, *Joe*...what does the 'G.I.' stand for?"

"Officially 'G.I.' stands for 'Government Issue,' but it's often incorrectly said to represent 'General Infantry.' Then again, there are popular theorists who link the term 'G.I.' to when they would stamp the letters 'G.I.' on military buckets and trash cans, which were the two-letter abbreviations they stamped on anything made for the army using 'galvanized iron.' In no time, everything army-related was being referred to as 'G.I.' so—"

Cutting Joe off, I asked, "Have you ever heard the term, *T.M.I.* by chance?"

As if deciphering a secret code, Joe guessed, "The Military Intelligence?"

"No. T.M.I. It means: *Too much information.*"

"As a member of the armed forces, I like to be thorough in everything I do," he assured me. "And if you are looking for a small pink, glittery book with a unicorn standing in front of a rainbow, it's haphazardly sticking out from between Colton's two mattresses in the corner of the room."



Retrieving my diary, I turned around, offered Joe a quick 'thanks' and added, "You may not be the right one to ask, but here goes nothing. I don't have an older brother. Our dad left Mom when Colton was just a toddler. Mom won't let me read any Teen magazines, and I don't want the few girlfriends I have at school to know I don't know anything about boys."

"Again, by a *real* mission, you mean—?"

"Look. We have a Junior High Winter Formal Dance coming up at school, and I don't know how to *talk* to boys. I don't know how to *dance* with boys. I don't know how to *act* around boys!" My list could have gone on and on, but luckily Joe stopped me before I hyperventilated.

"You do know that I have never **BEEN** a boy, right?"

I picked Joe up carefully by the waist and studied his features closely. "You—*look* like a boy to me."

"Oh, I am most definitely of the male species; however, technically, my existence began as a full-grown man, ready for military combat."

Disappointed, I said, "Oh, okay. I'm sorry I even asked you then."