

THE PURSUIT OF MICHAEL THOMAS

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I bounce into Geometry smiling ear to ear which is unusual because I hate Geometry. "Guess what?" I say to Mignon, my best friend and confidant.

"What?" she says, more interested in getting her homework than in what I have to say.

"I think I have a colossal crush on Mike," I say in a low voice.

"Are you referring to Michael Thomas, current boy friend of Lori Laney?" Mignon can be so intellectual!

"You got it. Now don't talk so loudly," I scold. "Do you want Lori to hear and sic Corretta on me?" Corretta is Lori's best friend and bodyguard. If Lori says "Jump!" Corretta says "How high?" Actually, it is more like Lori says "Jump!" and Corretta says "Who?" Corretta is such a pretty name for a girl the size of a linebacker.

Mignon lowers her voice, "How did this happen?" She's still talking a little too loudly, so I decide to write her a note. I take out a clean sheet of paper and write: "He marches near me in band. I think he is real nice and cute too. He's a little too silly, but I'm silly too. So it really does not matter. By the way, he's always smiling at me."

She replied: "One smile does not mean he's ready to elope! Anyway, he has a jealous girl friend (Lori Laney). You know how she is. Don't tell anyone about this because someone will tell Lori and she will get Corretta to beat you up. We shall resume this discussion at band practice."

I must ask one more question: "If Corretta decides to beat me up, will you back me up?"

She writes back: "I'll do my best, but Corretta can kill us both

simultaneously."

At band practice we trudge down to the practice field. I discuss my situation with Mignon. "It's almost as though he's sending me signals," I confide.

"The traffic cop gives you signals, but I don't see you drooling over him," is her response.

I refuse to honor that statement with a reply. I just cross my eyes and stick out my tongue.

Mignon's eyes light up. "Angelique!" she exclaims.

"Yes," I reply coolly, still thinking about the traffic cop remark.

"You can ask him to sit with you when we go on tour." Every blue moon, Mignon comes up with a good idea. There must be a blue moon expected tonight.

The band is going on their annual tour in three weeks. If he sits with me on the bus, we'd have lots of fun. Then, Presto, we'd be a couple.

I just can't seem to get a chance to ask him. Everytime I get ready to ask, Corretta shows up. Tonight there is a football game across town. Between the bus ride and the half time show, I should be able to get him alone.

On the bus he sits with Corretta. Corretta is a good watchdog. Lori is suspicious and has told Corretta to protect the fort.

I get up the nerve during the halftime show. When we get into formation on the field, I look him in the eyes and take a deep breath, "If you haven't got anyone to sit with you on the bus when we go on tour, perhaps you'd like to sit with me." It's done. After all of that effort I dare him to say no.

He looks at me (ah, the moment of truth) and says, "I'm supposed to sit with Corretta;" he makes a face, "but I'll see what I can do." A smile is my reply. I always smile when I have nothing to say.

At lunch I swap sandwiches with Mignon. She always has such yummy

sandwiches. I look up. Lori and Mike come up to me. Mike looks really uncomfortable. They both just look at me. I wish they would say what they came over here to say. Lori grants my wish. "If you want to sit with my boy friend, you have to ask me." I laugh. I can't help it. The girl is so audacious, that its funny. If I laugh any harder, my sides will crack. I look for Mignon; she has laughed so hard that her eyes are streaming tears. When we recover from near hysteria, Lori and Mike are gone. Laughter can be very disarming. I guess this means that I won't be sitting with him. C'est la vie.

I walk to computer science with my buddy Maurice. It's really nice to have a good friend that happens to be of the opposite sex. I love him dearly even though he can be so critical. "Angelique, it's not nice to make a play for some else's boyfriend," Maurice says.

"It takes two to tango," I return with a smile.

"I see," Maurice says sarcastically.

"I see what?" I demand.

"I see no future in that relationship," he returns. Some people just have to have the last laugh.

"On what information do you base this hypothesis?" I ask.

"Corretta." Rats. Got me again.

"That is a BIG reason," I admit.

"Humungous," he corrects.

"But Maurice," I whine, "you know how to handle Corretta." Maurice goes into hysterics. Everyone knows Corretta LUSTS after Maurice.

"Okay, you win," he surrenders. "If you want to risk it, I'm behind you all the way."

"Thanks a zillion. Luv ya!" I squeal happily.

"But," he adds "I refuse to use my physique to distract that moose,

Corretta." I just give him a friendly hug in reply.

I'm glad he's on my side. But I still have problems. I have really confirmed Lori's suspicions. How am I going to get out of this one? Hmm. Since he obviously is not interested, I'll ignore it. If all else fails, I can always lie.

Sitting on the bus on the tour, I look one seat in front of me and see Corretta and Mike acting silly. Lori has it all figured out. If Mike sits with Corretta, I can't get within a mile radius of him. I have to hand it to Lori; she is not as dumb as she looks.

I content myself with my "walkman" and sleep the five hours to our destination. We have a hard day ahead and I don't want to be sleepy. I'm not very pretty when I'm tired.

Being in concerts would not be so bad if it were not for the heat in the uniforms! I will not be the least bit surprised if I melt. The heat also makes everyone irritable. By the end of the day we are all ready to shoot each other.

At dinner I am ready to drop. I sit with Mignon and Sharon. I glance to my left and see Corretta and Mike chatting over their meal. I have an overwhelming urge to throw a buttered roll in that direction. I'm hungry so I repress the feeling and eat the roll.

On the way back I sit alone. I'll survive. I always do. Mike falls in the seat beside me and I'll be darned if he makes any move to go back to his seat next to Corretta. I know she is mad. I don't care. All's fair in love and war, and this is a combination of both. I look up and the boy is asleep. That's just my luck.

He, at long last, wakes up. He brushes his hair and drinks some Scope. I mean that literally. By now, I'm too sleepy to really care. Suddenly, he holds my hand. I panic and get short of breath. I decide not to do anything in order

to keep from doing the wrong thing. Thinking such thoughts, I go to sleep.

The next thing I know, we're home. It was a dream. I know it was. I open one eye and peek. It looks like it was not a dream. I open the other eye for a second opinion. I discover two things: there is a god, and he is holding my hand.