



Proudly Presents

PRETTY

WRITTEN BY YOLANDA WILLIAMS

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I have this friend. She's pretty, but she doesn't think she's pretty. She is though. Pretty. She has that girl-next-door look that never goes out of style. She has auburn hair and blue eyes. It's her smile, though, that everyone notices. It's one of those toothpaste commercial smiles. The kind of smile that celebrities are willing to pay a cosmetic dentist some serious money to possess. There's no two ways about it. My friend is pretty.

Like most pretty girls, and I'm talking about really pretty girls, my friend has no self-confidence. I'm serious. None. She smiles, yes, but it's an effortless smile, not a confident one. She's very popular with the girls at school, but she's painfully shy around boys. Of course, they all secretly have crushes on her, but she's very standoff-ish around the boys at school. Sometimes that can translate into snobiness, but it doesn't translate that way with her. She's sweet. She's the sweetest girl you could ever meet.

There's something almost irritating about someone being so pretty—but at the same time—being oblivious as to how advantageous being pretty can actually be in today's world. It's no secret that pretty people tend to be more popular. It's also no secret that pretty people have an easier time getting hired, getting promoted, marrying another pretty person, thus doubling the rewards such a pretty pair can acquire and add to their already charmed lives.

When I first heard that the most popular boy in school wanted to ask my friend out on a date, I was both excited and secretly jealous of her at the same time. She told me he wrote her a note and slipped it into her locker. The note said that he would like to take her to dinner and a movie, and told her—that if she were interested—to leave a note in his locker. When she showed me the note, she said she was sure it was just some prank. She said anyone could have written that note. I told her to come over to my house that afternoon, and, together, we could determine if the note was authentic or not.

When she arrived at my house, I compared the note's handwriting to an inscription from my last year's yearbook. There it was larger than life. No one could have forged that signature. It was a perfect match. It took some manipulation, but I finally convinced my friend to respond immediately. My friend gave me a million excuses on why she shouldn't accept the date, but I made her see the big picture. Here was a guy that:

- A. Either knew she was too shy to be approached face-to-face; therefore, created the perfect situation for her to get up enough courage to accept his invitation, or—
- B. Was as timid as she was; thus, becoming the perfect first date for her.

We spent the better part of an hour coming up with the perfect response to the-most-popular-boy-in-school's request for a date. I dug out some old stationary, and my friend wrote the word, 'Okay.' True, my friend might never be a novelist, but the response said what it needed to say. She promised to meet me at school the next morning thirty minutes early. I told her we could slip the note into his locker together. This was the only way I could ensure my friend didn't back out. We spent the rest of the evening doing homework and watching Julia Roberts in *Pretty Woman*.

My friend couldn't have been more nervous the night of the big date. Her parents had given her permission to date two years earlier, but she didn't want them to know about her first date for some reason. So she told them she was spending the night with me. She came over after school on Friday. After trying on everything in my closet, she finally decided on a simple, pink sun dress. It was a very Molly Ringwald kind of moment. Pink was definitely her color. She looked very *Pretty in Pink*.

The most popular boy in school showed up five minutes early, and my friend—although a basket of nerves—was ready. We hugged. I told her to have a great time, and off she went to begin what was sure to be the first of many Cinderella moments.