

2019 MCC Creative Writing Contest

Second Place - Fiction Category

"Situation Lizard" by Hannah DeVries

"Dear Diary," I wrote as I flopped onto my bed.

*"I know I haven't written in a while, but I've been ridiculously busy. Something happened today that threw me a little off. I'm still not really sure what to think of the whole thing. I went to the Bible study that just started at the college today. It's taught by Pastor Dave, he's a youth pastor at a local OPC church. I was walking down the hall to the room where Bible study is held and then right behind me, I heard*

*"Hey Hope!"*

*I recognized his voice instantly, of course. I just whirled around and there stood Noah Peterson right in front of me. I was just like*

*"Hey! How are you?"*

*I think my voice was at least a full octave higher than it should have been. Yup the chameleon is back and apparently, he now goes to college with me. Not only that but I'm going to be seeing the green Lizard himself every week for Bible study. I just don't know what to do. It took me so long to get over my crush on him the first time and now one year later he's just back. It was just so weird after everything that has happened. Well I suppose I should start at the beginning. I used to go to youth group with Noah when we were in high school. He was always so sweet, and I could tell how much he cared about his faith, so I developed a crush on him pretty quickly. The thing is, after I decided not to go back to youth group that year because I was too busy with college, stuff just started happening to remind me of him and it was relentless! The first time it happened was just two weeks after I'd stopped going to youth group. By that time, I'd realized that he wouldn't be going anymore either because he would be too old, he was nineteen then. I was eighteen so it would have made it my last year, but that fact didn't make it any easier. I remember I was having a normal conversation with Mrs. Kinsman at my church, when she randomly brought up the fact that she had run in to him at the store. That was the first of three different instances when she would just bring up him or his family in the middle of a conversation. That was only the beginning though. It was as if the entire universe was against me forgetting about him for a single second. I could recall another time when a bunch of chameleon stuff popped up on my Pinterest feed just after I and my best friend Diana had started giving our love interests animal code names. She was talking about the guy she liked on a group chat we have with my older sister, Jamie, and a few other friends. During the conversation Jamie sent a picture of a baby giraffe and then Diana decided that giraffe would be her crushes code name. Ever since then it was just a thing. Noah was soon dubbed Chameleon and then chameleons started showing up. Chameleons are a generally unadvertised thing but since we picked it as Noah's code name it seemed like they were everywhere. After a few months it started becoming less noticeable. I would find something about a chameleon, or a dog on TV*

*would be named Noah, but just recently a few more big things have happened. One of these events happened on the fourth of July. By then I had gotten to the point where I didn't care about all of the weird occurrences and had just started ignoring them. My parents, Diana, and I all went to the fireworks show downtown. There was a live band and Diana and I were standing there listening to it. After one of the songs the singer recognized someone in the crowd and yelled*

*"Noah! Is that Noah?"*

*I looked around and it wasn't chameleon but, in that moment, I just felt like someone was screaming at me that I wasn't allowed to not care about the reminders that kept showing up. A couple of weeks later, two weeks before the college semester, and the Bible study, started, I was eating out with Jamie and Noah walked by our table. I waved at him and he waved back and that was it, but it freaked me out a lot. I hadn't seen him in over a year and then he showed up where we were having lunch.*

My phone started ringing tearing me away from my thoughts. Pulling it out of my pocket and seeing it was Diana I quickly wrote that I had to go and swiped up to accept the call.

"Hello?" I answered.

"Hey! So, you should invite me to stay the night." Diana said laughing.

"Diana, I have a great idea! You should spend the night!" I responded now laughing with her.

"Okay, I'll head over in a little bit." She giggled.

"Okay, see you then!" I said hanging up the phone.

Later that evening I told Diana about what had happened at Bible study that day, and we talked about all of the stuff that had been going on.

"I can't really say that it is for sure, but after everything, it's possible that this is Gods way of pointing you towards him." She said after I'd told her everything.

"I know. I've thought about that too and I've been praying about it. I just don't get why this is happening now. It took me so long to get over him the first time. I don't want to have to go through that again." I responded.

"I get that, but I think you still like him." She said teasingly.

"I do not." I argued with her while fighting not to smile.

"You do too. I can tell. Even if you're going to deny it."

Jamie walked in then making us both stop talking. We shared a lot, but I hadn't told her about any of the stuff that had been going on with chameleon. She knew I used to like him, but she didn't know the things that had happened lately.

"What are you guys talking about?" She asked coming in and sitting by us.

Looking at Diana and thinking for a second I responded, "Situation Lizard!"

Jamie gave me a confused look and said, "Situation Lizard, what's that? When a lizard is crawling in your bra or in your pants? Because that would be quite the situation!"

That comment sent Diana and I into a fit of laughter that lasted for about ten minutes every time one of us were able to calm down the other would start laughing and it would start all over again!

"Out of all the things you could have said, why that?" I asked still laughing hysterically.

Jamie continued to look confused which did not help us to stop laughing either. Once we were finally able to calm down, I began explaining everything to her. After that night Diana and I started referring to everything that happened with Noah and I as Situation Lizard.

Weeks passed and not much happened between Noah and I. Somehow, we always ended up sitting next to each other during Bible study and I started to wonder if he was doing it intentionally. We talked when we saw each other and became pretty good friends, but I continued to deny with everything in me that I might like him, even the slightest bit. I always told Diana I would deny liking him until he asked me out. Unfortunately for me he was still as sweet, smart, and strong in his faith as I had remembered so that didn't help matters for me much.

The whole thing remained fairly uneventful until November came around. I had volunteered to be the counselor for the girls at a youth retreat that Pastor Dave's church was doing. The lady that had originally planned on going had gotten sick, so I offered to do it. I loved working with kids. I was even going to school to become a teacher and the retreat was over the weekend so I wouldn't have to miss class. What I failed to realize, however, was that Noah now attended the same church as Pastor Dave.

I arrived at the campsite early so that I could get settled before the girls showed up. I made my bed and waited until all them had arrived. We then played a few games to get to know each other until it was time for supper.

Entering the dining hall, I searched for our able group. Each church group sat at their own assigned tables during mealtimes. I finally spotted Pastor Dave and began leading the girls over to him, when I noticed Noah sitting next to him and talking with the boys.

Taking the seat across from him I smiled and said, "Hey, I didn't know you would be here."

“I’m counseling the boy’s group with Pastor Dave.” He said grinning.

We talked throughout supper and I couldn’t help but notice how good he was with the kids. They all loved him and flocked to him for his attention. Something was different about him tonight too. Just the way he was laughing and talking with me. I was normally so comfortable with him but tonight his laugh was putting butterflies in my stomach. I didn’t want the night to end so quickly, but after the speaker talked and left it was time to take the girls back to the cabin for bed.

The next morning, we all ate breakfast together and then went out to the lake to go ice skating. Sitting on a bench, I smiled as I watched two of the littlest girls from my cabin struggling to help each other slide around on the ice in their boots.

“Aren’t you coming?”

I started at Noah’s voice behind me and turned to answer.

“That’s probably not the best idea. Ice and I don’t get along very well.” I laughed.

“Oh, c’mon it would be fun!” He urged.

“I don’t know” I responded uncertainly.

Noah walked around to face where I was sitting and grabbed my hands.

“I promise I won’t let you fall.” He said with a grin, and with that he pulled me to my feet and led me unto the ice.

Noah helped me at first until I got the hang of it. I was aware of his hands on mine at every moment, but soon we were both sliding around and laughing with the kids. After a couple of hours, it was time to take the children back up to the dining hall to have lunch. The kids went running and yelling across the campground as I tentatively made my way back to solid ground. Noah reach my side and pulled me easily back to the bank.

“Show off.” I said teasingly.

He smiled and looked at me as I grew increasingly aware that he was still holding my hand.

“Did you have fun?” He asked.

“I did actually.” I said smiling.

Noah looked down at the ground for a minute and then back up at me.

Clearing his throat, he said, “I was wondering if you would like to do it again sometime, or something else it wouldn’t have to be skating.”

I looked at him stunned for a second. not sure I could trust what I was hearing.

“Are you asking me out on a date?” I asked.

A blush started to creep its way up his neck, and it was all the answer I needed.

“I would like that.” I said smiling.

Then I quickly added, “I’ll race you to the dining hall. Last one there’s a chameleon!”

“A what?” He asked, but I just looked at him and laughed and with that I took off running.