

Late Bloomer

by Jerry Ratch

It was ridiculous. We were only in 3rd grade. How can anyone know at that age, only eight, that Judy F. was the girl he was meant to be with for the rest of their lives?

But that was how Stephen O. behaved. As if they both already knew this, and they were both just waiting for the laws and the world to adjust, so they could get married and have children and buy a home together and all the rest of it.

They never bothered to look around them at any of us, the others. We were just mean, if we couldn't see the obvious.

Well, they got married, in the little ritual marriage that our gang had adopted. That basically meant they were going steady and would not look at or consider anybody else. I happen to know for a fact that Stephen O. and Judy F. used to kiss. But of course, at that age, that was the extent of it. Well, not entirely true, they walked about to and from school and all over the playground holding hands and gawking into each others' freckled little faces.

It was just stupid, to the point of being ridiculous. But we didn't know big words like ridiculous yet. So, it was just stupid.

I began to wonder if I should try and kiss this girl that lived near the school yard, over on Washington Street. Can't say that I even remember her name anymore.

Myself, I never got married until the fifth grade. I was a late bloomer, apparently.

