

## NOTES

The battle between the sexes is an outdated war that has kept many members of the opposite sex from becoming what they could potentially become: Great friends. In his heartwarming poem, Jake Barton introduces us to a fictitious young man named Marcus Daniels, who learns early on that opposites can indeed be attracted to one another and no one should go through compulsory education alone. This poem should be performed by a male and be entered in Poetry Interpretation; however, a performer could choose to enter this selection in Dramatic Interpretation. If used in Poetry Interpretation, the drama mask icons are simply visible to show the performer when to turn the pages of the manuscript.

It all began, I suppose, on Valentine's Day—  
Eleven years ago.  
Mel was one of my best friends.  
Oh, Mel is short for Melanie.  
Since she was a girl, and I was a boy—  
We were unlikely best friends;  
But we were best friends nonetheless.  
We didn't start out as best friends.  
In fact, we didn't start out as friends at all.  
It's funny how time changes almost everything.



Mel and I sat next to each other in kindergarten.  
My last name is Daniels.  
Melanie's last name is Donovan.  
So, yes, we had one of 'those' type teachers.  
Over the next few years,  
Mel and I would share *many* of 'those' type teachers—  
Those teachers who went out of their way to:

1. Seat us in rows according to our last names
2. Make us eat next to our alphabetical neighbors, and
3. Threaten us with our lives, if we ever changed seats.



For the first five-and-a-half months of school  
Mel and I didn't speak to each other.  
After all, Mel was a girl.  
And I was your typical kindergarten boy.

Obviously, we had nothing in common.  
Then, in early February, it started.  
Our teacher had everyone decorate a shoe box.  
The rules were simple.  
Everyone was to paste  
White, pink and red construction paper  
To a shoe box (brought from home)  
And decorate said “shoe box”  
With hearts and Cupids and other “lovey-dovey” symbols  
To declare our fondness for one another.

We were kindergarteners!  
Hello! No one was in “fondness” with anyone!  
Unless you counted things like:

1. Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
2. Matchbox cars, and
3. Riding your bike through mud puddles!

Those things—I loved!  
But pink boxes filled with sappy Valentines? No way!



Finally, February 14<sup>th</sup> rolls around.  
There's a big classroom party.  
I notice not everyone's shoe box is decorated  
With hearts and Cupids and other “lovey-dovey” symbols  
To declare their fondness for the others in our class.  
Mel's Valentine's Day box is covered with pictures of  
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles,  
Matchbox cars and muddy bikes!  
When I saw her Valentine's box, I thought, “Maybe I was wrong.  
Maybe kindergarteners *can* fall in love.”



Now that I realized Mel was not like the other girls,  
I tore up her store-bought card  
And wrote her an original Valentine:

*You are the coolest girl in the class!  
Your friend,  
Marcus Daniels*