

“WALLFLOWER”

by Louise Plummer (expanded by Jerry Laffey)

Yes, I look good, I needn't worry about anything. I look sensational in this red dress. Red looks best on me. Except for the buttons. I don't like the buttons mother picked. But if I hold my arm up in front like this, no one will see them there. I feel the music. I'm with it. It's going to work for me tonight. Positive thinking will work. It will!

Oh, no! Brad Ortmeyer is here. That creep! I hope he stays away from me. I can't believe it was coincidental that he has the initials B.O. If he spends the whole night clear across the room, I'll still smell him. And that pizza face of his! Yuk! The power of positive thinking will keep him away. It will! It will! IT DID!! He sat down with three of his buddies to make the “foul four.”

Wow! Vanessa LaFleur just walked in – late as usual. And look at the guys flock around her. Boys cling to her like a girdle to my Aunt Fanny! And look how short her skirt is. It should be “X-rated.” If Vanessa would only stand by me, I'd have plenty of boys around. But then, I might have to talk to her --- and what would I say? I mean, she's in everything and is SO popular! And I'm nobody. Oh, well, I guess I didn't have to worry. Her evening is obviously going to be devoted to the biggest fox in the whole school -- Freddy Mack.

There's Herb Blakely. He's looking at me. He likes my dress. I can tell. He took a step toward me. I'll bet he wants to dance with me, but he's afraid to ask. I'll smile at him. Come across the room, Herbie, and ask me to dance. The power of positive thinking is at work. Ask me, Herbie, You jerk! He'll be back, maybe.

If I don't stand by any other girls, someone will ask me to dance. Oh my gosh, here comes Martha Bluke. Go away, Martha. Don't stand here by me. The power of positive thinking. It worked! She went over to the corner with Mary Anne Little and Beth Kelly.. They're dancing with each other! Oh, I can't stand it. Three girls dancing in a corner. It's disgusting! I think I'm going to die right on the spot.

Oh, there's Ralph. I'll smile a little more. He is so darling. He looked at me. My mouth hurts from smiling and my arm hurts, too. Crummy buttons! Oh, Ralph, you could make my entire adolescence if you'd just ask me to dance. Ask

me, Ralph. He asked Lila Kirk. Jerk! Look how close they're dancing. Isn't anyone going to break them up? I would never dance that close with anyone.

Except maybe Chuck Stewart. He is so neat. He always stands with his hands in his pockets. And his hair touches his ears in a really groovy way, and I think he shaves. I'll bet he's the only boy in this school who shaves. There he is. Oh, Chuck, you are so *numero uno neato*. Oh, I can't breathe. Oh, if I could dance with Chuck Stewart, I'd never ask for another thing in my entire life. I'm smiling at him, and I've got all my buttons covered, and he's looking at me. I winked at him! How could I wink at him? It was an accident. I've never in my life done that. He'll think I'm a flirt. Oh, Chuck, I didn't mean to wink at you like a creep. Positive thinking. Positive thinking. Ask me – ask me! He asked Martha, Martha!! How could he ask her? He'd rather ask a girl who dances with girls than a girl who winks!

Oh, well! Come on Bradley B.O. Ortmeyer and ask me to dance. I can act like I'm embarrassed. At least I'd be out on the dance floor instead of standing here like a wallflower. He's getting up. Come on, Brad! There, I even smiled at you. Go ahead, Romeo – ask me! Of all the nerve! He asked that scrawny, ugly little Penny Carter to dance. And she accepted. You nerds!

Phooey, who cares? I don't! To think I came to this duddy dance when I could be home watching _____.

My father! My father, the chaperone, is walking toward me! No, Daddy, no!

No Daddy, don't smile so lovingly at me. Oh, please let me be struck dead instantly. He says I'm the most beautiful thing he's seen all evening. Would I dance just one with him? What'll I do? WHAT'LL I SAY?