

Son of Interflux

PHIL, Sam and Simon are best friends at an arts school in Long Island, New York. Simon's father is the senior vice-president of Interflux, a huge corporation whose expansion plans threaten the school's green space. Despite the family connection, Simon is leading the efforts to fight Interflux. On top of this, Phil's friends are now having girlfriend trouble, as Sam dates Barbara and Simon struggles with his feelings for Wendy. Phil is getting frustrated.

PHIL: (*Addressing Simon*) Sam? Oh, Sam's a boyfriend now. It happened this weekend, around the same time as Barbara became a girlfriend. That's the way it works. They come in pairs. Boyfriends never concern themselves with matters as trivial as fighting the corporation. All of their brain cells are taken up with thinking about the people they're boyfriends of. It's the same with girlfriends, only their brain cells are all taken up with making sure the boyfriends' brain cells are all taken up with the girlfriends.

No, I'm not jealous. This is not jealousy. It's aggravation. Get this. One date goes well, and Barbara, the timid little kid who can only worship from afar, gets cocky. You know what she did? She insulted the wreck! And what did Sam say? He said, "Yeah, I know. Phil and I have been thinking about getting a new one for a long time." Give me a break! This is *the wreck* we're talking about. The most beautiful, wonderful Volkswagen ever to rust, rattle and heave! He should have told her, "Listen, carrot-top, this is a great car. If you want to be driven around in a limo, well then *that's too bad!*" Let me tell you, this is a textbook case of boyfriend syndrome.

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Don't be surprised that Sam told Barbara that you like Wendy. It's just another symptom of boyfriend syndrome. And if I were you, I wouldn't say too much about this. You could be fighting off the effects of the same thing pretty soon, what with Wendy liking you and all. It's just bizarre enough for me to believe it. You and Wendy. Hmm.

Sam has got it really bad. I've seen boyfriend syndrome before, but our man is really a victim. If you and Wendy get together, do me a favour and try to retain at least a little bit of the old Simon. This is a strange world. You think you know a guy, and zap! He turns into a boyfriend. Bing. The end.

by Gordon Korman, adapted by LAMDA