**Sometimes Hope Works**

by Pete Edwards

According to a recent study, software engineer is the most desirable occupation in the United States. I have heard others argue that major league bullpen catcher is the best deal going. They’re both wrong, because I have the best job in America.

My name is Hope and, despite what you are thinking, Hope is not female.

My job is easy for three simple reasons: 1) Low expectations 2) All the credit 3) None of the blame. I can see your brow furrowing and your mouth getting knotted, so let me break it down for you.

When people hope, they usually don’t work. When a girl says, “I hope he notices me”, she doesn’t mean “I’m going to dress hot and stand up straight and learn about football or monster trucks or comic books” or whatever silly ass thing it is that he likes. She means “I hope some unknowable, uncontrollable, unseen force causes that boy to look at me, and to make this happen, I will simply continue to breathe right here in this spot.” I know it. You know it. Even deep down inside she knows it. It just isn’t going to happen.

But if it does, that’s Number Two. If by some miracle I get around to helping her out, or the boy actually likes her, she thinks “Hey, I hoped. It happened. Go Hope!” No matter what the actual cause, she didn’t have any active role in achieving the desired outcome. Poor pathetic girl. But for me, that’s golden. I’m a hero, everybody’s happy, and the most I’m out is a quick trip in the HopeMobile. (Which, incidentally, is a 1983 Yugo GV. I don’t need a mechanic, I’m Hope.) I cruise on down to Dateless High School and spend a few periods sprinkling Make-it-Happen Dust® all over the happy couple.

Now, let’s say that Hope hasn’t been as efficient as his older brother Industry. (Stupid Industry, always showing me up at holidays, and acting like he’s Mr. Big Shot, just because he owns, like, a billion franchises in China.) Anyway, let’s just imagine that old Hope’s been working through backlogged requests and hasn’t gotten to our girl who likes the boy. If the boy never makes a move, it’s not like the girl is screaming “Damn you hope!” holding her tiny, white-knuckled fists high. Hey, all she did was *hope*. She didn’t do any personal interest leg work, didn’t hatch any meet cute schemes, didn’t even talk to the poor bastard. These are the reasons she will continue to mope along quietly, eventually trading her sorrows for a small condo and a clowder of cats.

This may sound a little mercenary, but it doesn’t bother me a bit. It’s worth noting that this gig is a lifetime appointment. No one’s disaggregating my success data or drafting corrective action plans if I don’t meet my quotas. Even the people whom I serve don’t realize that fortunes invested with me might turn on events as arbitrary and insignificant as another press of the snooze button. If that’s not bad enough, most of the poor schmucks haven’t yet realized that hope is more about what they do and less about what I do, or more often don’t. So hey, until you all get more proactive or less invested, keep hoping. I like my job.