

Dear Jo by Christina Kilbourne
A book talk by C. MacLennan

My name is Maxine – Max for short. My best friends name is Leah. It all started out so innocently. We saw the Internet as a fun way to meet people. My mom and dad are absolutely Stone Age when it comes to the Internet. There was no way I could have fun on the Internet at home. Here is how the dialogue with my dad went.

Read page 21 – “Maxine we’ve been through this before” to page 23 “we can discuss it again.”

So the only place I could go on the Internet was a Leah’s house. We went to this one site called the Hobo Hotel. It’s virtual, and you can choose a character and then talk to other characters. That was fun for a while. Then we started going to music forums where we could chat online with people who like the same music as we do. It was there we met 2funE. He said he was 16. He was hilarious! Leah and I decided to become one person hottietoo. We told 2funE we were 14. Of course we didn’t give him our location. We knew enough about Internet safety not to do that! He told us to go on MSN to make things easier and so we opened an account, and kept exchanging e-mails. It was so much fun! Soon this boy called muscleboy interested Leah, so she helped me to keep writing to 2funE while she wrote to her new Internet friend.

Read page 34 – “ I knew it was wrong”. To page 24 “it was so dangerous.”

My parents were right. If I had only listened to them. I should have known something was wrong when Leah was quiet the night we went to the drive in with our friends. The next day her parents discovered that she was missing. They soon found out that she had gone to meet her Internet boyfriend. She has been missing for 6 months. I am so depressed and worried I have to go see a shrink. The shrink is making me write in this journal that I call Jo. I try to have hope that Leah is alive, but it just gets harder and harder as the months go by. Then the police come to see me. They have discovered that 2funE and muscleboy are both the same person. Leah and I were writing to the same guy! It could have been me that was missing. The last e-mail I got from 2funE was this.

Page 38 (Read e-mail letter)

Thank goodness I was grounded and couldn’t go. So he just made Leah his victim. The police have a plan. They want to use me as decoy to catch this Internet predator. I want to help find Leah, but I am really scared.

Where is Leah? Is she alive? Will Max’s parents let a 12 year old help the police?

Will they catch the Internet predator?

To find out read Dear Jo by Christine Kilbourne.