

In a fully developed paragraph, discuss a character trait of one of the main characters in the novel you are reading. Use **specific story details** to support your ideas.

Authors use characterization, what a character says, does, and what others say about the character, to paint a picture of a person in the story. In the short story "What's the Worst that Can Happen?" by Bruce Coville, the main character Murphy Murphy shows himself to be a very determined individual. In the story Murphy has a crush on his classmate Tiffany. He decides that he wants to make her notice him, so he fights his insecure nature and takes some risks. First, he writes her a note to ask her to go for pizza. Unfortunately, the note is intercepted by the school bully who proceeds to blackmail Murphy. Next, he buys a pack of gum, hoping to win her over with sweets. He is foiled again when the teacher takes the pack of gum from him. The most important example of Murphy's determined nature, though, comes in his reaction to Tiffany's request for him to be in a play with her. Despite the fact that she is asking him to play a doofus, despite the fact that he has terminal stage fright, and despite the fact that he wishes that a meteor will come and strike him before the performance, he works hard. He tells his friend Mikey "If I let her down, I will hate myself forever!" He not only learns his part, he also plays it well. At one rehearsal Tiffany actually says, "This is great Murphy" and at the second rehearsal he makes Laurel "perhaps the most solemn girl in the school" laugh. It is only his typical bad luck that causes the skit to have a disastrous outcome when he trips, falls off the stage, and breaks his leg! No he doesn't get Tiffany's affection in the end. But these actions by Murphy truly show him to be a determined individual.

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