

The Bell Ringer's First Date

Amy is in her office. Joe comes up beside her.

JOE

So, Amy, we've known each other for a while now.

AMY

I know! I've really enjoyed getting to know you.

JOE

Me too. I mean... for you. I've enjoyed knowing you. Not like that. We're friends. But maybe not?

AMY

What?

JOE

I just... I wanted to tell you... I like you.

AMY

Aw, I like you too, Joe.

JOE

And if you want to go for some drinks tonight... I know this bar that sells sandwiches.

AMY

Sandwiches?

JOE

Yeah, but they put them IN your drink, so you're eating a really soggy hoagie martini. Anyways, It's a really cool place and--

AMY

How about tonight at eight?

Joe suddenly stands upright like a meerkat, and sprints out of the room. Lights down. After a second, a church bell tolls, counting to four.

Transition to a bar, where AMY and JOE are eating. There are too many martini glasses containing half-eaten soggy sandwiches in them. The waiter comes up to them.

WAITER

Are you two enjoying yourselves?

JOE

I--

WAITER

How about anohter Hogie Martini? Hogie on the house, the drinks cost double.

JOE

That sounds great. Amy, I--

WAITER

Roast Beef, Ham, Turkey, what'll it be?

JOE

I'll get the Turkey.

WAITER

Great, I'll get out of your hair.

AMY

What were you saying?

JOE

I just wanted to say that I was nervous to be here tonight, and I just think that this could be the moment where our lives change for the better, y'know?

AMY

Joe, it's our first date.

JOE

But it feels like we've developed such a deep connection, and I think that--

His head shoots up, like a small dog hearing the word 'walk,' and he sprints out of the establishment, brushing past the waiter.

WAITER

Whoa, looks like he had one too many soggy hoagie martinis. Care for some perogies stuffed into a craft beer mug?

AMY

I'm good.

WAITER

You sure? They're really good!

AMY

I don't even know what a--

WAITER

Perogie is? Egads, man. Woman. They're like ravioli dumplings--

A church bell is heard, very loudly. It counts to nine. Shouting:

We're right next to the bell tower! Sorry about the noise!

AMY
(Shouting)

It's very loud!

WAITER
(Shouting)

You said you want some perogies?

AMY
(Shouting)

What?! No?

The bell stops.

WAITER
I'll get you that perogie mug right away.

AMY
Wait! I didn't-- Whatever.

She begins to call Joe's phone. Joe comes sprinting back into the bar, breathing heavily, and he answers it while standing right in front of her.

JOE
It's Joe.

AMY
Where did you go?

JOE
Oh, don't worry about it. It's pretty drab in here, want to head back to my place?

AMY
Oh. Um--

JOE
Take your time.

WAITER
I got the perogies!

*The waiter thrusts the mug into Amy's hands.
Transition to Joe's bedroom, where Amy and Joe are foreplaying.*

JOE
And then I'll grab you like you grab the fire extinguisher during a small household fire that you're confident is relatively contained.

AMY
Oh yeah?

JOE
And I'll throw you to the ground like my mother on my first day of kindergarten when I wouldn't leave the car.

AMY
Yeah?

JOE
And then...

AMY
Yeah?

JOE
Then?

AMY
YeAh?!

JOE
We'll have sex!

AMY
Oh, Joe, you're so feisty.

JOE
Now tell me what you'll do to me.

AMY
Oh, you know I'll roll you over.

JOE
Yeah?

AMY
And then I'll grab my mother's antique pearls and start--

Joe jumps out of bed like a toy snake being released from its dwelling, and sprints out of his bedroom. She chases after him. Silence on stage for a moment. Then she drags him back in by his ear.

JOE
You gotta let me go, you gotta! It's LIFE or DEATH.

AMY
Why do you keep running off, huh?

JOE
You don't need to know, it's personal.

AMY

What is it? Huh? Because we were having a moment there and you can't just up and run away!

JOE

Okay, okay, I'll tell you.

AMY

Go on...

JOE

I'm the bell ringer.

AMY

What?

JOE

The bell ringer. I ring the bell.

AMY

In the church? The loud, annoying one?

JOE

Yeah. I ring it. Every hour, on the hour.

AMY

I thought those were automatic?

JOE

(Whispering)

There's no such thing as automatic. That was a lie created by the government to create a--

*The church bell starts, and rings ten times. Silence
for a long time.*
Get out of my house.