

Chance on a Grasshopper

written by

Jo Kolar

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E-mail: jokolar2@gmail.com

INT. APARMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING

MIKE (late 20's), a young man with boyish good looks, sleeps in his bead, smiling in bliss. A poster of a large beetle clings to the wall above him.

Outside hip hop music booms from a stereo, kids shout and laugh, a DRIVER screeches to a halt almost running a PEDESTRIAN over.

DRIVER (O.S.)

Hey buddy, do you want to die this morning? Get outta the damn road!

PEDESTRIAN (O.S.)

Fuck off! Keep your eyes on the road instead of up girls' skirts!

A CAT enters the room, jumps onto a desk chair and fixes its gaze on Mike.

Mike is still asleep with the same smile.

Suddenly, his eyes pop wide open and the smile turns into a toothy grin.

A second later the alarm goes off but only once. Mike swiftly turns it off. And before you can say 'good morning', Mike jumps to his feet and races to the bathroom.

The smile hasn't left his face.

BATHROOM

Mike scrubs himself in the shower, brushing his teeth with one hand and rubbing a bar of soap on his chest with the other hand. He puts down the soap and in the steam that fogs up the shower glass, he writes:

'I JUST HAD SEX'

A moment later, he dries himself off a he steps out of the shower stall.

MIKE

(to the audience)

Yes, you read that right. I just had sex last night. And not just any sex. The best, most mind-blowing sex I've ever had. With the most amazing girl I've ever met. And that's hard to say considering I live in New York and there 8.5 million people living here with me.

He dresses up and heads to the...

KITCHEN

Mike scarfs down a bowl of cereal.

MIKE (CONT'D)
 (with food in his mouth)
 I met her about a month back at
 this new coffee shop up on first
 avenue. She was in line in front of
 me and ordered a cappuccino - my
 favorite drink. I bought it for her
 and one thing lead to another...

His phone buzzes. It's a text from the girl, MICHELLE.

MIKE (CONT'D)
 Did I mention her name was
 Michelle?

On the cell phone screen:

MICHELLE (TEXT)
 Hey Mike, can we meet today at
 central park in about an hour?

MIKE (TEXT)
 Yeah, I'll be there. See you soon

He puts his bowl in the sink and heads to the...

LIVING ROOM

Mike grabs a jacket and pulls it on. The cat runs after Mike
 as he is about to leave, but he shoos it away.

MIKE (CONT'D)
 (to the audience)
 On our first date I took her to the
 fair. On the second, a nice picnic
 in Central Park. And on the third,
 her bedroom...
 (a beat)
 I'd grown up watching disney
 movies, all wide eyes and open
 mouth.

Mike imitates a young kid watching disney. Mouth agate, eyes
 wide in wonder to movie magic.

MIKE (CONT'D)

They all told me that true love exists, and I didn't believe it until a month ago at the coffee shop.

He leaves the apartment.

EXT. NEW YORK STREETS - CONTINUOUS

All around him people bustle on the sidewalk, the morning frowns still on their faces.

Mike, a twinkle in his eyes, looks like he just won the lottery.

MIKE

(to the audience)

I mean, we have so much in common. We both like hip hop and r&b. We both hate peanut butter, and no we aren't allergic to peanut butter. We are, however both allergic to dogs, but not cats. Her cat's name is Phoebe. Mine is Ben.

As he crosses a busy intersection, a TAXI DRIVER almost hits him, but Mike jumps out of the way just in time.

TAXI DRIVER

What are you doing? Get outta the way!

The smile doesn't leave Mike's face. In fact, he barely notices the driver and continues talking without missing a beat.

MIKE

She likes to go to parks. I like to go to parks. And today, we're going to the most beautiful park in New York. Actually, in all the world.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - A LITTLE LATER

Mike heads into an eclectic, family-owned coffee shop whose patrons are mostly college hipsters and dropout philosophers.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Mike approaches the BARISTA.

MIKE
 (to barista)
 Two cappuccinos please.
 (to audience)
 Did I mention Michelle loves
 cappuccinos?

BARISTA
 Name?

MIKE
 Mike and Michelle.

Mike stands to the side, waiting for his cappuccinos. As he waits, he looks around at the walls, the ceiling, and finally to a CUTE RED-HEAD holding a latte. He stares at her for a moment before she notices and he turns away.

BARISTA
 Michelle! Meat!

The barista places two cappuccinos on the counter. Slightly confused, Mike picks up the cappuccinos. He looks at the cup. It reads:

'MEAT'

Yup, they're somehow for him.

He turns around too quickly and trips onto the cute red-head, spilling her latte all over her shirt.

CUTE RED-HEAD
 Shit!

MIKE
 Oh, I'm so sorry!

But just as he's about to get some napkins for her, he gets a text.

MICHELLE (TEXT)
 Hey, where are you?

MIKE (TEXT)
 On my way.

As soon as he presses send, he forgets all about those napkins and the redhead.

He heads to the door and notices a small grasshopper by a chair leg.

MIKE (CONT'D)
(to audience)
There is one thing though that we
don't have in common.

Mike walks over to the grasshopper and manages to pick it up
with a free hand.

MIKE (CONT'D)
She hates bugs. And I mean she
HATES bug. Not eww. Not, let's
squish it. More like burn it with
fire.

Mike exits the coffee shop.

EXT. NEW YORK STREETS - CONTINUOUS

Mike places the grasshopper on a nearby bush.

MIKE
Which is a shame because I'm an
Entomologist, and I haven't gotten
around to telling her.
(a beat)
Hey, but we both love cappuccinos!

Mike steps into a piece of gum. Half of it tears off and
sticks onto his shoe. Mike doesn't notice, a smile still
pasted onto his face.

In the b.g., a MAN steps onto the same piece of gum.

MAN
Fuck!

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - LATER

In the swirl of orange Autumn leaves and an endless green
lawn, a conservatively dressed woman sits on a bench. Her
name is MICHELLE (late 20's).

Mike spots her and walks towards her.

MIKE
(waves to her)
Michelle!

Michelle sees him but only a faint, almost reluctant, smile
crosses her face. As she gets up, Mike hurries over to her.

They both hug, but when Mike goes in for a kiss on the lips, Michelle awkwardly turns her face so that Mike's lips crash against her cheek instead. Michelle flinches.

Mike is caught off guard but takes it with humor.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Michelle, how're you?

They both sit down on the bench.

MIKE (CONT'D)
I got you a cappuccino. Your favorite!

He hands a cup over to her.

MICHELLE
Thanks.

MIKE
So you sounded really-

MICHELLE
Mike, I need to talk to you.

Traces of worry spring behind Mike's boyish smile.

MIKE
Yeah, sure. What's up?

MICHELLE
I can't see you anymore.

MIKE
(shock)
What?

MICHELLE
God, I feel really bad about this.
It shouldn't have gotten this far,
but I have a boyfriend.

Mike remains silent, unblinking, just staring at her.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
I didn't think the relationship was going anywhere. I mean I waited years for this, but then he proposed to me early this morning. And I said yes.
(a beat)
I'm sorry but having sex with you was a mistake.
(MORE)

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
I shouldn't have done it. God, I'm
really sorry but I can't do this
anymore.

Michelle remains silent for a beat as she waits for a
reaction from Mike. But he just stares at her like someone's
turned him into stone.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
Mike?
(a beat)
I'm so sorry.

She gets up and leaves.

Mike stares ahead without saying a word, face completely
blank.

People pass by him, a BOY plays fetch with his dog, a WOMAN
delivers a sermon from a portable pulpit.

Time seems to move on without Mike...

When suddenly, the cute red-head from the coffee shop
appears, walking down the path. She spots Mike and, in an
instant, her eyes narrow.

She wears a sweater, but underneath it, a sliver of her
coffee-stained shirt shows.

CUTE RED-HEAD
Wow, I can't believe it.

She heads straight over to Mike and takes a seat beside him.
Mike doesn't even glance at her.

CUTE RED-HEAD (CONT'D)
I had an interview today. And did
you even stop to help me?

She opens her sweater, revealing the coffee-stained shirt.

CUTE RED-HEAD (CONT'D)
See?

Mike finally looks at her and her shirt. The blank expression
melts into slight concern.

CUTE RED-HEAD (CONT'D)
Ah, it moves.

The concern leaves.

MIKE
 (looks directly at her)
 Hopefully fast enough to get away
 from you.

Mike gets up and walks away, but the red-head won't let up.

CUTE RED-HEAD
 Not quite.

MIKE
 And who exactly are you?

The irritation on her face fades to a smirk.

CUTE RED-HEAD
 Abby.

MIKE
 (takes wallet out)
 Alright Abby, how much do I owe you
 for dry cleaning?

ABBY
 A job interview.

For a moment, she looks as if she won't really answer his question. Then-

ABBY (CONT'D)
 Twenty-five dollars.

Mike smirks this time and hands her the money.

The two head out of Central Park.

EXT. NEW YORK STREETS - CONTINUOUS

Dirty puddles line the sidewalk edges, drowning pieces of trash.

Mike notices her walk alongside him, close at heel.

MIKE
 What? You following me now?

ABBY
 Well, you were in such a hurry at
 the coffee shop. And you're in such
 a hurry now. I'm curious.

Mike let's out a laugh of disbelief.

ABBY (CONT'D)

What's your name?

Mike looks at her for a moment, debating on whether to tell her, but her quirky charm gets to him.

MIKE

Mike.

(a beat)

What kinda job interview did you have?

ABBY

A useless one. A barista position.

Mike laughs again, this time a genuine one.

MIKE

You gotta be kidding me. Was it the one we were at?

ABBY

No, the one a block from there.

MIKE

Well, I bet you can make a mean cappuccino.

ABBY

I guess, but not there anymore. Not with how I look.

Just then, Mike notices a taxi speeding close to the puddles by them. He steps in front of Abby, taking the full splash of filthy water.

ABBY (CONT'D)

(jumps back)

Shit!

Mike is drenched, his shirt stained with gray and brown, but he doesn't look miserable or mad. No...he's grinning.

ABBY (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

MIKE

Sorry about bumping into you earlier, and mucking up your job interview. I know I can't get that back for you, but hopefully since I look like such a dumbass...

Mike then pulls off the cutest puppy-dog face he has ever done in his life.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Can you forgive me?

ABBY
(smiles)
Well, you do make it hard but maybe
I can let it slide.

She then takes out a paper from inside her purse and jots down her number. She hands it to Mike.

It reads:

"212-907-0087"

ABBY (CONT'D)
I'll see you tomorrow.

She walks away.

Slightly confused, Mike turns the paper over. It's a flyer. In fact, it's a flyer for an entomological collection featuring a rare species of grasshopper.

And it's tomorrow.