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First Date

John Holthe

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First Date

This is the tragic, true story of Joe Nathan. He was an average kind of guy until an event that took place in his last year of high school led him down the road of ruin. That event was Joe's first date, and now Joe is a dateaholic.

It is through Joe's tragedy that I can give this piece of advice to all the men of the world and parts of Ohio: if you haven't started dating, don't. Go home and read a book.

If you have one date, then you'll want two. Two becomes three and three becomes four. Soon you'll have ENOUGH dates to start your own calendar. That is when you need to check into the Betty Ford Clinic for Dating Dependency.

This is Joe's story.

Joe woke up one morning and knew it was a Monday. He could tell it was a Monday because Mondays were the days that the personification of Death hovered over his bed.

He dressed in his blue football jersey with the number one on the front and back, blue jeans, denim jacket, and white, almost worn-out, sneakers.

As he combed his blonde hair so that a comma of hair hung over his left eye, he asked his reflection, "Do you know why I can't wait for tomorrow?"

"Why?" he gave voice to his reflection.

"Because you get better looking every day," answered Joe.

Joe got to school ten minutes before the doors were unlocked. Although the October air was cool and crisp, Joe remained warm thanks to his denim jacket. Unfortunately, his comma of hair that hung over his brown eyes was now an exclamation point all over his head.

"Hey, Joe! Nice hair! Is that your 'confused senior' look?" yelled a familiar voice.

Joe turned to face his good friend Bill Weatherspoon. He would have been the perfect example of the phrase "six foot two, eyes of blue," except he was six feet one and had brown eyes.

"What's up?" asked Bill.

"Not much," replied Joe. "Just being the main character of this short story."

"What are you going to do this Friday? There's no school, you know," said Bill.

"How come?" wondered Joe.

"The principal was trying to drain his sinuses with his vacuum cleaner, and the hose got stuck. Friday is the day the doctors are removing the hose

from his nose."

Joe chuckled, "That reminds me of when he tried to drill his own teeth. I guess I can finish my new James Bond book."

Bill suggested, "Why don't you go on a date?"

Joe shook his head. "Dates are one of the three things I have trouble with."

"What are the other two?" asked Bill.

"Math and tightrope walking. Besides, I don't know of any girls that would want to go out with me."

"But I know a few girls that like you."

Suddenly the bell rang and all the students trudged into the building. Joe was surrounded with questions. Who were the girls that liked him? What did they look like? What grade were they in? What is the capital of North Dakota?

His first class was Psychology. The substitute teacher was frantically looking for the work that was supposed to be assigned that day. Little did she know that it was smoldering in the boy's room. The class had a free day, which gave Joe a chance to ask a few girls out.

His first choice was Tonya Shepard. She was a blue-eyed, blonde-haired beauty and also a cheerleader.

Joe greeted her, "Hi, Tonya. You did a good job at Friday's game."

"Thanks," she smiled as she checked her make-up.

Joe asked, "Are you busy Friday? If you're not, then would you like to go out with me?"

"Oh, I'm sorry, Joe, but I'm already dating someone on the football team."

"Oh, yeah?" He tried not to sound dejected. "Who?"

"The defense," was Tonya's reply.

"Now that's what I call team spirit," commented Joe.

Since Tonya was a strike-out, Joe set his sights on Mary Staton, a tall, raven-haired girl with aspirations of being a nurse. As he approached, Mary was studying a diagram of the small intestine.

"What're you looking at?" queried Joe.

Mary replied, "The small intestine."

"I guess that makes you a girl with a lot of guts," said Joe.

Mary politely chuckled. Which is what you guys reading this story are probably doing. But just wait. It gets better.

"Would you like to go out with me on Friday?" asked Joe.

By John Holthe

"I would," Mary began, "except I've been invited to an autopsy on Friday."

"You would rather hang around with a dead person than me?" Joe exclaimed, "What does he have that I don't?"

The bell cut off the rest of Joe's dialogue, which was not fit to print. Joe met Bill in the hall. Bill had his arms around the girl he was going to date on Friday. Bill had more dates than a history book.

Bill asked, "How's it going, Romeo?"

Joe replied, "Not good. Five paragraphs of asking girls out and nothing to show for it."

Then the world stopped. Coming down the hall was the most beautiful girl Joe had ever seen. That's not saying much because he has been created for only four pages.

She was five feet and four inches tall. She had oaken-colored hair that hung on her shoulders. Her eyes were sky-blue, and her teeth were so bright that you had to wear sunglasses to protect your eyes whenever she smiled. Her name was Georgia Martinez. This would be a big step for Joe. A guy with a mild case of cerebral palsy was going to ask the second runner-up for Homecoming Queen for a date.

She was at her locker as Joe timidly walked over to her. He started to sweat bullets—enough bullets for the next three RAMBO movies. He tapped her on the shoulder.

Georgia turned and smiled. "Hi, Joe. How are you?"

"Fine," lied Joe. His heart was racing. It came in second, being beaten by his nose, which had more practice at running.

"Listen, I know you probably have a lot of guys asking you out, but I was wondering if you wouldn't mind giving me a chance. Before you answer, I just want to list some of the advantages of dating a handicapped person."

"First, you get better parking. Second, if you get sick, I know a lot of doctors that can take care of you. Third, you get a chance to become an honorary handicapped person."

Georgia laughed and said, "That has to be the most original ask-out line I have ever heard. Sure, I'd love to go out with you.

The date was made. On October 17, 1987, Joe Nathan escorted Georgia Martinez to a movie and dinner. Joe wanted to make a good impression. The movie started at seven, so he got ready at six in the morning. He used eight bars of soap, ten bottles of shampoo, and five bottles of mouthwash.

The date was a complete success. When Georgia dropped Joe off at his house, they walked to his front porch. With the light from the moon illuminating her face, Georgia confessed, "Joe, you taught me something that I'll never forget."

"You mean that trick with the spoon hanging off your nose?"

"No," said Georgia. "You taught me that having a disability doesn't mean you're disabled. I was surprised by how well you can think on your feet."

Joe shrugged, "Why not think on them? I can't do anything else with them."

"Well," began Georgia, "I had a nice time. I hope we can do it again sometime."

"Sure," replied Joie.

Up until now, Joe had been calm, cool, and collected. Then Georgia stood on her tippy-toes and kissed him. It wasn't one of those wimpy kisses that Bob Barker gives. It

was a full-fledged, super-duper kiss. It lasted for 5 1/2 seconds.

Georgia left Joe on his front porch. After she drove off, Joe turned and tried to get inside his house. That was hard because his eyes registered three front doors. He chose the one in the middle.

He went to his room and got ready for bed. His dad came in and said, "She kissed you, didn't she?"

"How can you tell?" Joe asked with amazement.

"Simple. You have a grin from ear to ear. You have red lipstick smeared on your face, and you forgot to take off your street clothes before you put on your pajamas."

So, there you have it—the true story of how a model citizen became hooked on dating. Remember: this could happen to you.

(JOHN HOLTHE of Altus describes himself as "a dashing student of SOSU" who wants to be a famous writer. "First Date" is his first submission to WESTVIEW.) *

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