7 or 8 Things I Know About Him - A Stolen Biography

by Natasha Whyte

Wonderful

When his mother was a little girl, her father would braid her hair until it was exactly right. When she asked him how it looked, he always said, “Wonderful.”

The Bell

In his father's house, there was an iron bell only rung when guests came to dinner. He asked always to ring it and was once reprimanded for doing so an hour before dinner was ready. The guests, once seated, were then asked to watch him perform, solo, a scene of his choosing, in which a dinner party was involved. There was much laughter until his mother's boss broke a crystal water glass. His mother's boss apologized profusely to his mother, who said, with slight humour, that it was her husband's set.

The Blanket

The day his mother left his father, she passed the Native American blanket hanging as a sign of peace in the town hall and thought to herself that she would like to move back to Ohsweken. Now she organizes the protests against building on sacred burial sites.

Garbage Man

For the first ten years of his life, the same garbage collector visited his court. One Tuesday, there were two. It was the garbage man and his daughter. She was later killed at the World Trade Center bombings of 9/11.

Listening In

Overheard him throwing up, again.

Pepperoni

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Littered on the floor of his car are the oily wrappers of dozens of beef jerky wrappers. His father ate them before immigrating to Canada from England, and kept the pantry always stocked. His breath always smelled like his father's.

Reprise

When his grandfather came to visit for his 14th birthday, he was allowed to ring the dinner bell when it was time. He rang it with such excitement that it slipped off the chain and fell to the floor, putting a dent in the hardwood. Even his mother laughed.