

Kazooed

by Rudis Muiznieks

"I've been on eight blind dates in three days," she tells me. I can't quite work the math out, but somehow the combination of her wildly undulating eyebrows and harsh vocal tone manage to convince me.

"I can play the kazoo," I tell her. It's my one saving grace--the thing that will make me stand out from the rest.

Her eyes narrow. She produces a small green kazoo from her purse and holds it out. I can honestly say I was not expecting that to happen. The tension between us congeals.

Even though it's been over a decade since I last played, I manage to hum out a pitch-perfect rendition of Bach's *Christ lag in Todes Banden*. She sits through the entire twenty minutes, but I don't think she's impressed. She didn't even bat an eye when, about half-way through, the restaurant's Mariachi band joined in a cappella.

I reach out to hand the kazoo back, and she smacks it clear across the room into a bowl of soup. She grabs me by the collar of my shirt and kisses me so hard that my teeth press painfully into the backs of my lips. When she finally pulls away, her beet-red lipstick has spread about half an inch around her lips, and her hair is mysteriously tousled.

"Let's go," she says.

She doesn't wait for my answer. I fumble a few bills out of my wallet on to the table, and quickly follow her out into the heat of the night.

