

*The MANAGER and ALL then exit except for the STORE ELF #1, STORE ELF #2, BUDDY and JOVIE. JOVIE is at one side putting on her coat. BUDDY is smiling and sucking on a candy cane.*

**BUDDY**

*(staring at JOVIE)*

Gee, she's so pretty.

**MANAGER**

Well, why don't you ask her out?

**BUDDY**

Out?

**MANAGER**

On a date. Take her to dinner...

**BUDDY**

Eat food with her?

**MANAGER**

You know. Show her a good time, dance with her, take her home, get her into bed...

**BUDDY**

*(continuing the list)*

...snuggle under the covers, get out the flashlights, eat fluffernutter ...

**MANAGER**

Whatever turns your crank, Buddy.

*STORE ELVES #1 and #2 exit, as JOVIE starts to leave.*

**JOVIE**

Good night.

**BUDDY**

Hey, wait a second. Would somebody like a hug?

**JOVIE**

No, would somebody like a punch in the throat?

**BUDDY**

No.

**JOVIE**

So, good night.

**BUDDY**

Wait. Do you....wanna eat food?

Do I want to eat food?  
**JOVIE**

Um-hmm. You know...  
**BUDDY**

Are you asking me out on a date?  
**JOVIE**

Yes, right, that's it. A date!  
**BUDDY**

Oh, you don't want to go out with me.  
**JOVIE**

Yes, I do!  
**BUDDY**

No, you don't.  
**JOVIE**

Yes, I do!  
**BUDDY**

Why?  
**JOVIE**

Well, because I like you. I feel really warm when I'm around you. And, um, my tongue swells up.  
**BUDDY**

Your tongue swells up?  
**JOVIE**

*(with a swollen tongue)*  
**BUDDY**

Yeth, it doth. See?  
**JOVIE**

Well, it's weirdly nice that I make your tongue swell up, but I just don't see this date happening.  
**BUDDY**

Oh, of course. I'm sure you already have a date tonight. Obviously. You probably have guys wanting to eat food with you all the time. Lunch, dinner....I bet you have a different guy for breakfast every morning. It was dumb of me to ask.  
**JOVIE**

What the hell. I'm free Thursday.

**BUDDY**

Thursday? Thursday! Yessss!!! This is going to be the best Thursday ever in the history of Thursdays!

**JOVIE**

You know what? I find if you lower your expectations in life, you avoid a lot of disappointment.

*She starts to leave and notices he isn't moving.*

Don't you have a home to go to?

**BUDDY**

Sure. I have a home to go. A nice home, with a big bed. And walls and a ceiling and everything. I'm just going to stay here and put up a little more tinsel.

**JOVIE**

Seriously? Okay. Well. Good night.

**BUDDY**

G'night, Jovie.

**#4b – Goodnight, Jovie**

*JOVIE exits. MUSIC underscores as LIGHTS change and BUDDY, alone on stage, lies down covered by a Christmassy-looking quilt. BUDDY sings himself a lullaby.*

AND IF IT'S TOO COLD TO SLED  
WE'LL EAT GINGERBREAD INSTEAD  
AND THEN CUDDLE TILL HE TUCKS ME IN AT NIGHT

*BUDDY snores loudly.*

*Fade to black.*

*Lights up. The following morning. Buddy wakes to see The MANAGER arriving for work followed by a department store FAKE SANTA who takes his place in Santa's big red chair. CHILDREN and PARENTS stream into the toy department along with the other STORE ELVES (except for JOVIE). MUSIC out.*

**MANAGER**

Santa! Santa's here! We're open! Send in the kids.

*A MOTHER leads a small BOY to the FAKE SANTA.*

**FAKE SANTA**

*(in a heavy New York accent)*

Ho, ho, ho! Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas!