

Five Alarm Side 3 – Caleb and Ellen

(Caleb enters carrying a microphone. He speaks to a camera man, who we don't see.)

Caleb: How's this, Doug? Maybe over here? Light's good. *(He notices Ellen watching them.)* Hello there.

Ellen: Hello.

Caleb: Are you a contestant?

Ellen: Me? No. I'm just an assistant contestant. I was just doing spoon inventory. Making sure we've got all our spoons. *(She counts them.)* Yep. Got 'em all. What are you doing?

Caleb: I'm a reporter for-

Ellen: Oh! You're the new reporter for Cable 5!

Caleb: That's right. I'm here to do a little coverage of the competition.

Ellen: Wow. That's a big camera.

Caleb: Yep.

Ellen: Don't you get nervous?

Caleb: Why? Do I look nervous?

Ellen: I don't know. I don't know what you normally look like.

Caleb: Well, I'm not nervous. I did four years of journalism school.

Ellen: Oh, don't feel bad. I did two years of grade six.

(To Doug.) Yeah, coming. *(To Ellen.)* Excuse me.

Ellen: Sure. Good luck. I'll just be over here...with my spoons.

(Caleb moves to his mark. He jots down some notes on a small notepad.)

Caleb: *(Quickly, to himself, practicing/scripting.)* "Good afternoon Killaloe. Coming to you live from the 17th annual Wayne Rose Memorial Chili Cook Off." *(To the sky.)* Lord, when I die, please don't let them remember

me with a chili making competition. Alright, I think I've got it, Doug.

Let's do this.

(He straightens his clothes. His nerves begin to show. He clears his throat or does vocal warm ups. He stretches his neck side to side to loosen up. Finally he lifts the microphone to speak and he is stricken with camera fright. He forgets all his notes. Ellen watches.)

Good afternoon, Killaloe. I'm Channel 5. No. This is Channel 5. And I'm coming to you live from the K-Killaloe fairground. Today is the 18th annual-...wait, no. Is it the 17th annual? I'm sorry. Excuse me. *(He flips through the note pad but he's lost his place.)* I wrote it down here somewhere. Well, never mind. There have been a lot of them. It's the Wayne Rose Memorial Chili C-Cook Off today. Where competitors meet every year to go head to head in a brutal battle...No. "Brutal" is probably the wrong word. I hope it won't be brutal. It is just chili. Let's hope everyone keeps it chill. E. Right? *(Beat. He tries to get back on track.)* So. We have two dozen competitors here today, all vying for the trophy. Each one of them has brought their best recipe in the hope of walking away with the title of Chili champion. Let's go get to know some of the competitors. Maybe I'll see you down at the fairground later today for the judging. Thanks for your patience, Killaloe, I'm-

(The camera man is waving him down.)

Just a moment. Oh, yes. I have been asked to read the official rules of the competition before we get underway.

(He takes out a sheet of paper. He has not read these beforehand. Ellen pays rapt attention to make sure that they have followed the rules. She mentally checks off those they have followed, with pride, until Caleb gets

to “non-contact’.)

“All recipes must be original and made from at least 10% fresh ingredients.” That’s aiming high. “All participants must wash their hands.” Well, that’s a good reminder. And, as one of the judges, I’d appreciate if you did. “This is a non-contact competition.” Is this a mistake? *(He looks up at the camera man.)* Oh, I’m getting the wrap-it-up signal. So. Come on down and be part of this momentous day in Killaloe history. And, if you are joining us, please remember to keep it beautiful. Throw out your pets and pick up after your trash. I’m Caleb Seaton, and I’ll catch you later. *(He does a little ball-throwing motion. This is a signature move he’s hoping will catch on.)*

(The filming is done. Caleb crumples and gives an apologetic look to the camera man.)

Oh God. I’m sorry, Doug. I don’t know what happened. Maybe I had too much coffee this morning. I-I I’m not usually like this.

(Caleb’s eyes track the camera man – who we don’t see– until he’s alone. Then he slumps to sit on the ground.)

Come on, Caleb! Pull it together. What’s wrong with you? There are three people watching, at most, and one of them is your mother. Don’t blow this.

Ellen: What did you say your name was?

Caleb: It’s Caleb.

Ellen: Caleb what?

Caleb: Caleb Seaton.

Ellen: Holy shitake!