

Hardly Workin'

STEVE, an employee
JOCELYN, the boss
WATER COOLER, a water cooler

STEVE, a suited-up employee of a generically boring, cubicle-lined office building, finishes telling a hilarious story to a group of colleagues.

STEVE
...and that's when I told him, "Not with *my* pen, ya don't!"

Disembodied laughter as the punchline slays. Steve sighs, satisfied.

STEVE
All right you bunch of clowns, let's get back to work.

The crowd disperses, and Steve walks from his cubicle to the communal WATER COOLER to fetch a drink. As he fills a cup with water, the air bubbles in the gallon re-disperse and make that deep sound. You know the one.

WATER COOLER
Glung glob glung.

Steve sips, and as an invisible co-worker passes by:

STEVE
(still the jokester)
Hey, Murphy, let's see those spreadsheets by Thursday, huh!
Ahh!, get outta here!

Steve leans against the water cooler as he takes another sip, but he leans too far and falls over.

As he scrambles to get back up, he grabs the cooler's nozzle for leverage and it breaks off, spilling water everywhere.

WATER COOLER
Pshhhhhhhh...!
Glob glob glob glob-

*He gets back up, panics, and plugs the leak with his hand.
It sort of works.*

WATER COOLER
Splunk! shhh... splirk... prrt.
...

JOCELYN approaches.

JOCELYN
There he is. The man of the hour!

STEVE
Jocelyn!

JOCELYN
I've been looking for you.

STEVE
Have you?

JOCELYN
I have.
I know what you did.

WATER COOLER
Gulp!

STEVE
You do?

JOCELYN
Do !!
You know, this company would be in deep, deep water if it weren't for you.

STEVE
Would it?

WATER COOLER
Glog.

Jocelyn laughs.

JOCELYN
You really are a riot. It's a good thing you're such a hard worker, too.
Otherwise, I'd have to fire you! Ha!

STEVE
Ha! Ha!

Steve fumbles with the water cooler a little.

WATER COOLER
Glub, glub!

JOCELYN
Got time for a quick meeting?

The water cooler grabs onto Steve's hand tightly. Don't let go!

WATER COOLER
Gluuurmp!!

STEVE
Uhhh, yeah! Yeah, 'course I do.

JOCELYN
Great. My office in ten minutes. Then I'll let you get back to work.

STEVE
They don't call me workaholic for nothing!

Steve does a dramatic flourish with his free arm and forces a wide smile.

Jocelyn exits. As soon as she's gone, Steve panics again.

STEVE

Crap! Crapcrapcrap.

WATER COOLER

Pshhhh prrrrr....

The water cooler desperately holds on to Steve's arm to try and keep the water from flowing out.

STEVE

Nope! No!! The water. Stays in. The cooler!

All the while, Steve struggles to undo his tie with one hand. He does a lot of twisting and writhing around. The cooler starts to move with him in some awkward attempt to help.

Somehow, these fumbling, scrambling movements lead to A POSE, with a sudden dramatic spotlight:

Steve and the water cooler hold each other close like ballroom dance partners.

A beat.

Steve and the water cooler perform a full-on tango routine together. It's passionate, it's heartbreaking, it's... getting water all over the floor.

By the time they stop, Steve has managed to remove his tie. He crumples it up into a ball and stuffs it into the water cooler's spout. It sort of works.

WATER COOLER

MMMRPH!

STEVE

Sorry, old friend. Looks like you're the next person's problem now.

Steve notices his clothes are damp.

STEVE

Ugh. I'd better change before the bossman sees.

WATER COOLER

Mmmglb?

STEVE

Of course I have an extra suit in my cubicle. I wasn't raised in a barn.

Steve exits.

Water cooler waits.

Jocelyn approaches.

JOCELYN

(towards offstage)

I'll just be a second, Viv!

Jocelyn places a cup under the spout, but notices no water is coming out... She looks closer and spots the tie.

JOCELYN

What in the world?

WATER COOLER

Glung!

Steve returns, dry.

STEVE

Jocelyn!

JOCELYN

Steve. Did you- Is that a new tie?

STEVE

You noticed.

JOCELYN

I always recognize a Steve Tie.

WATER COOLER

Blrrp!

The cooler turns its back to Jocelyn and Steve, keeping its spout (and Steve's tie) out of view.

JOCELYN

I was just going to get a quick sip before our meeting.

STEVE

Don't-!

JOCELYN

I'm sorry?

STEVE

Don't... use the communal gallon.

Why don't we go down to the break room and get you something from the fridge?

JOCELYN

You always insist on going above and beyond, don't you?

STEVE

The least I can do for my favorite boss.

JOCELYN

I'd better be your only boss, mister!

She laughs. Steve laughs, too, a little strained.

JOCELYN

But really. I'm parched, and the break room is all the way across the hall. The communal cooler is just what I need.

Jocelyn reaches for the spout again, but the cooler shifts out of her grasp. Steve stands between Jocelyn and the cooler.

STEVE

Is it, though?

WATER COOLER

(same inflection as Steve:)

Blirp grb glog?

JOCELYN

Yes. I'm thirsty.

Jocelyn makes another move for the cooler. Same thing. The cooler shifts and Steve blocks.

STEVE

Are you, though?

WATER COOLER

(same:)

Glug gloo blrp?

Jocelyn is losing patience.

JOCELYN

Steve. I know most people are fans of your office pranks, and believe me, I love a good goof myself.

Real goofster, I am!

But whatever this is- I don't get it. And I really don't have time. So if you'd excuse me, I'd love to get our meeting started as soon as-

Jocelyn moves Steve away from the cooler and approaches. Suddenly, SLOW MOTION.

In a dramatic flourish of self-sacrifice, the water cooler decides to unstuff Steve's tie from its spout, right as Jocelyn is stepping closer. The water cooler throws the tie in Steve's direction, and then water begins spraying nonstop from the spout.

Back to regular speed, Jocelyn gets soaked and falls over, and Steve's drenched tie lands on his face.

The water runs out.

WATER COOLER

Gluglug glump.

...

Bloip.

Beat. Steve hides the tie behind his back.

STEVE

Jocelyn. I tried to-

Jocelyn silences him with a hand in the air.

JOCELYN

My office. Now.

She gets up and exits. Steve follows behind her.

As he passes the water cooler:

STEVE

Thank you.

He places his tie around the water cooler's neck, then exits.

Beat. It's quiet.

The water cooler sits down in its own puddle, cups its hands, and scoops up some water to its mouth.

It slurps.

WATER COOLER

(satisfied)

Ahh...

End of play.