

Remind Me Again

A one-act play for the stage

by Sharyn Rothstein

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Characters:

Miranda, late twenties, conservatively dressed.

Jane, late twenties, a little flashy.

Suze, late twenties, pink and married.

Setting:

Scene One: A city street corner.

Scene Two: A beige corporate office with two adjoining desks or cubicles.

Notes:

Italics and ***bold italics***

are used to signify emphasis or a raise in volume and an even greater raise in volume.

Scene One

A sunny day. MIRANDA, in her late twenties, walks hurriedly down a New York street. She is trying to take her coat off as she walks, made difficult by the fact that she's holding a briefcase and a coffee. Realizing she might have passed her street, she looks up by a street sign to check. Just as she looks up a man, KISSYINVADER, whose back should be to the audience and who should be of a non-descript nature, leans down and almost kisses her. Miranda steps back, frozen in shock. KISSYINVADER laughs loudly and walks away. Miranda looks after him then quickly walks away.

Scene Two

Miranda enters the accounting office. She puts down her coffee, accidentally burning herself, and hangs up her coat. She takes a deep breath. From around the corner, JANE, also late-twenties and hard looking, a know-it-all from Kindergarten type and well-dressed, comes over.

MIRANDA

Hey- Jane: Listen to this: I'm walking down the street this morning, I look up, and some *guy* almost *kisses* me. Can you believe that?

JANE

Oh my *god*.

MIRANDA

I know!

JANE

That's wonderful! Was he hot?

MIRANDA

I don't know- I wasn't really paying attention-. I don't know if he was "hot". And I really don't think it matters. What *matters* is that he completely invaded my space-he-

JANE

Well, yeah, but would you care so much if he was a *good* looking man invading your space?

MIRANDA

Yes!

JANE

Bullshit.

MIRANDA

I can't even believe you're arguing this.

JANE

Look. Suze, from the third floor?, *met* her husband because he "invaded her space". They were on the subway and he grabbed her breasts and said, "These are lovely."

MIRANDA

He grabbed her breasts?

JANE

Uh huh.

MIRANDA

And she married him?

JANE

Yes. But the *point* is that he had the *courage* to say something to her. *And* that he's attractive, because if he wasn't attractive then it would've just been another case of, you know, sexual harassment or something.

(SUZE, late twenties, in a much-planned pink outfit, walks by Miranda and Jane. Jane grabs her arm.)

JANE (CONT'D)

Suze! I was just telling Miranda how you met Mark!

(Suze swats Jane in a girly way.)

SUZE

Oh my God! Isn't it a *gas*?

MIRANDA

It's-

SUZE

You know, I'd gotten so used to *scowling* at every man who said something to me that I almost *completely blew* it. But something stopped me. I turned, fully prepared to scowl, but then I just... smiled. I like to think that it was because of fate. Or because he's white.

MIRANDA

Because he's white?

SUZE

You better believe it. Like an albino.

MIRANDA

(a little grossed out)

Oh.

JANE

Some guy tried to kiss Miranda on the street today.

SUZE (CONT'D)

Oh! How wonderful for you!

JANE

Miranda considers it an invasion of privacy.

SUZE

Well, I guess... but isn't it *romantic*?

MIRANDA

No, I really don't think it is.

SUZE

(looking at Jane knowingly)

Oh.

MIRANDA

What?

SUZE

He wasn't attractive, was he?

MIRANDA

I don't- I don't know! Why does it matter if he was attractive or not?

SUZE

Ohhhh. I get it. Was he black?

MIRANDA

I don't know!

JANE

How can you not know?

MIRANDA

I wasn't really paying attention- I was so shocked- I don't remember what race he was.

SUZE

Oh. Then he was probably Puerto Rican. They can be kind of ambiguous.

MIRANDA

Ambiguous? This isn't- look, the point *is*, this *man*- a *stranger*- someone I don't *know*, leaned down, tried to kiss me, then *laughed* and walked away. I'm so- look at me, I'm shaking! I'm completely shaken up.

(Beat.)

JANE

Oh. You didn't tell me he *laughed*.

MIRANDA

Does it matter? Either way-

JANE

Well, of *course* it matters.

SUZE

Yeah. Laughing is rude.

MIRANDA

The whole *thing* is rude!

SUZE

Yeah, but laughing? It's like... They only laugh if they think you're *really* ugly.

JANE

Or fat.

SUZE

You know, because then it's a joke.

JANE

Because then *you're* a joke. *(short pause)* Don't you think?

MIRANDA

I- (*they look at her*) I guess. I didn't really *think* about the laugh-

SUZE

Yeah. It probably affected you on an *inner* level. Laughing can really make you insecure.

(*Suze and Jane nod at each other.*)

MIRANDA

Look, the laugh didn't- the whole *thing* made me insecure.

SUZE

(*to Jane*)

Uh huh.

MIRANDA

What?

SUZE

(*still to Jane, stroking her womb area*)

This is why I hope I have *boys*. Girls are so *insecure*.

JANE

It's true.

MIRANDA

Insecure? I am not insecure.

SUZE

You just said you were. (*to Jane*) Didn't she just say she was?

MIRANDA

I said it *made* me insecure. That *guy* made me insecure. I mean it just left me dumbfounded. How can a human being treat another human being with such... such disrespect?

JANE

Well, why didn't you ask him?

MIRANDA

Ask him?

JANE

Sure. I mean, he was about to *kiss* you, you might as well ask *why*, don't you think?

MIRANDA

Well, I- I didn't really think I *could* ask him. I thought he might, you know, if I said something he might get... violent.

SUZE

(*nodding to Jane*)

Definitely Puerto Rican.

JANE

Really, Miranda. It was the middle of the day. He's not going to *rape* you in the middle of the day.

MIRANDA

He's not?

JANE

No. Besides, *rapists* don't bother women during the day.

MIRANDA

They don't?

JANE

Why would they? It goes against their entire plan of action. If you harass a woman when she's walking around by herself in the middle of the day she's going to be that much *less* likely to walk around by herself at *night*, when it's *easy* to rape her.

SUZE

That's true.

JANE

Rapists are nocturnal. Like hedgehogs.

MIRANDA

Hedgehogs?

JANE

Yes. Many people don't know that hedgehogs are nocturnal. And *like* hedgehogs, *rapists* are creatures that, while very vulnerable within, have *evolved*, due to the demands of Mother Nature, into prickly, aloof animals. (*short pause*) You can't touch a hedgehog...

SUZE

Just like how you can't touch a rapist.

(*Beat/Pause*)

MIRANDA

Why would you *want* to touch a rapist?

(Suze and Jane look at her.)

SUZE

We're speaking metaphorically Miranda.

JANE

Look, so the guy "invaded your space", so he "intruded on your privacy". At least it was *real*.

MIRANDA

Real?

JANE

Think about how *few* really real experiences we have in our lives. How few personal interactions we have with others.

SUZE

It's a blessing.

JANE

It is.

SUZE

It's how I met Mark.

JANE

And he's an albino.

MIRANDA

(growing increasingly frenzied)

So you're saying, when a man- *any* man- walks by you on the street and, and calls something out: "nice ass" "hey cutie" *anything*... it doesn't bother you? It doesn't make you anxious? It doesn't make you want to run away? To ask him if he has a mother? To slap him across the face?

JANE/SUZE

No.

MIRANDA

You're saying if someone grabbed you on the street and just- like this-

(Miranda, in a bit of a frenzy, grabs Jane's face, almost kisses her and then laughs. She lets go. An awkward pause.)

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

(embarrassed)

That doesn't make you uncomfortable?

JANE

Well of *course* that made me uncomfortable. You're a woman. *(Suze and Jane exchange disapproving nods. Beat.)* And we're in an *office*.

SUZE

Really, Miranda. There's a time and place for everything.

MIRANDA

That's... I don't understand. So a *man*... On the *street*... doesn't make you uncomfortable? Do most women feel this way?

SUZE

I can't really speak for most women, Miranda. I believe in the individual.

MIRANDA

Jane?

JANE

Yes, I think they do, Miranda. And do you want to know why?

MIRANDA

Please.

JANE

Alright. *(a dramatic pause)* Come with me on a journey of the mind. Imagine the last time you awoke in the morning, slipped into a stunning new outfit, blew out your hair, shaved your legs, walked out on the street and... *not a single man said anything*.

(Suze and Miranda gasp an agonized gasp.)

JANE (CONT'D)

Exactly. You can't pick and choose. Either you want male attention or you don't.

MIRANDA

But it shouldn't be all or nothing!

JANE

Look Miranda, you can't be *reliant* on men one day and *disgusted* by them the next. You'd go totally bi-polar.

SUZE

Noah only let the animals on in twos-ies, Miranda. If you try to walk alone, you'll just drown in the flood.

MIRANDA

(trying to understand Suze's remark)

Well, but... but... I mean, doesn't it *scare* you? The idea that at any moment any man could just- just *say* something to you, say something *about* you? Touch you? Follow you?

JANE

Miranda, you have to be realistic. Look at Mindy, from the fourth floor? Three years ago, a man told her had a hot ass and she stopped going out at night, threw out all her mini skirts and completely stopped waxing her upper lip.

SUZE

(nodding)

She went totally Hasidic.

MIRANDA

She did?

JANE

And did it help? Did it change the world? Did it change *one single man*? No.

SUZE

No.

MIRANDA

(hopelessly)

No.

JANE

No.

SUZE

No.

MIRANDA

(still hopeless)

No.

JANE

So I mean why not *embrace* it? Why not *enjoy* it? *Enjoy* the catcalling, the name calling, the ass grabbing. *Enjoy* being stared at, pawed at, *mauled* in public. *Enjoy* holding your keys between your fingers at night, carrying mace in your sportsbra when you jog. (*becoming frenzied*) *Enjoy* darting back and forth from one side of the road to the other *just because a MAN is coming toward you*. (*beat*) I mean, enjoy it. (*short pause*) I know I do.

MIRANDA

You do?

JANE

Yes, I do. (*beat*) It reminds me that I'm a woman. (*beat*) And aren't I lucky?

(*Jane and Suze smile at each other gaily. They look at Miranda expectantly. Miranda smiles weakly. Jane and Suze walk away.*)

END OF PLAY