

IN A NEW YORK MINUTE

TEN MINUTE PLAY

By Matt Thompson

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SYNOPSIS: Six individuals from different backgrounds and points of origin find friendship in The Big Apple.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(3 MEN, 3 WOMEN)

ABBOTT (m).....English actor, now living in New York.
THEODORE (m)Greek cook, now living in New York.
FRANK (m)A New York native.
JENNIFER (f)Born in Ohio, this newspaper editor
recently moved from Florida to New
York.
KYRA(f)Russian immigrant, now living in New
York.
MARITZA (f)Puerto Rican girl who comes to New
York.

AT RISE:

Lights up. Four tables with two chairs adorn the set. A restaurant. ABBOTT, MARITZA, JENNIFER, FRANK, and KYRA are scattered about the stage. They tell their respective stories out to the audience.

ABBOTT: *(With an English accent.)* I just moved to the States.

KYRA: *(With a Russian accent.)* I always wanted to live here!

MARITZA: *(With a Puerto Rican accent.)* The Big Apple!

JENNIFER: I moved here from Florida.

FRANK: *(With a New York accent.)* I've lived here all my life.

JENNIFER: Nobody moves to New York from Florida.

THEODORE: *(Enters with an apron on, speaking with a Greek accent.)* I come from Mykonos. A little island in Greece. One day, back home, I was cooking dinner for my brothers Alexander, Danaus, Sebastiano, Iphicrates, Pirro, Jirkar, Risto...

KYRA: I was making hachaputa for my mother in Georgia.

THEODORE: ...Telegonus, Egidio, Diomedes...

FRANK: I am an expert microwave chef.

KYRA: She says I make the best hachaputa in all of the Russia!

ABBOTT: England may have conquered the world, but it certainly didn't conquer the kitchen.

THEODORE: ...Damos, Antony, and Charley...

MARITZA: As a little girl, I always dreamed of visiting the mainland!

ABBOTT: I up and left for America. I'd seen many television programs about a place called...

KYRA: Texas?

MARITZA: Texas.

ABBOTT: Texas!

JENNIFER: Largest state in the country.

THEODORE: All of my brothers are yelling...

ABBOTT: *(With a Texas accent.)* Yeeeeee ha!!!

KYRA: The hachaputa is burning! The hachaputa is burning!

FRANK: Outta the way, mac!

THEODORE: They keep telling me, "Theo, do this! Theo, do that!" I wanted my own life!

ABBOTT: Whoa hoo!

FRANK: *(To ABBOTT.)* More like, "WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
HOooooooooooooooooooooo!"

ABBOTT: Texas was big.

THEODORE: I always felt so small.

MARITZA: Of all my siblings, I was the youngest.

THEODORE: I was the youngest.

JENNIFER: I was the oldest with three brothers.

KYRA: I was an only child.

JENNIFER: So I knew how to take care of myself.

THEODORE: So I up and moved to New York! Just like that!

MARITZA: You never know who you are going to meet....

ABBOTT: Lived in Texas for a while, and then I decided to move to another city in America...

MARITZA: The largest city in America.

JENNIFER: The biggest city in America.

FRANK: The best city in America!

ALL: New York!

FRANK: (To JENNIFER.) Her and me, we met awhile back.

JENNIFER: He was driving a cab.

FRANK: As I was going down 125th Street.

JENNIFER: I got lost on 125th Street.

FRANK: I never go down 125th Street. Never.

JENNIFER: New to town.

FRANK: I figured she was lost.

JENNIFER: I was lost.

FRANK: I slowed down.

JENNIFER: He opened the door for me. New York cabbies never open doors for you.

FRANK: I did.

JENNIFER: He did.

FRANK: And she gets in my cab...

JENNIFER: He really flattered me. He said...

FRANK: Hey lady, what are you doing in this neighborhood? You're gonna get hurt!

JENNIFER: It was touching.

FRANK: I can get in touch with my feelings when I need to.

JENNIFER: Lucky for me, he did. So I jumped in the cab.

FRANK: I said, "Where ya goin', lady?"

JENNIFER: And I told him I wanted to go to the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

FRANK: And I said, "You're going to the Met? What are you, nuts?
That's on the other side of the city!"

JENNIFER: I didn't know. New York seemed so large. I mean, I grew
up in a small town...

FRANK: In Iowa! I remember!

JENNIFER: Ohio, Frank.

FRANK: Yeah, Ohio. All those states with extra vowels. I get
confused.

JENNIFER: *(To audience.)* Previous to moving to New York, I
worked as an editor for a major periodical in Florida, but I felt that I
needed to be in a city with more...

MARITZA: Culture!

KYRA: Excitement!

FRANK: People!

JENNIFER: Umph!

ABBOTT: Umph? This coming from a writer.

JENNIFER: Anyhow...

FRANK: So, anyhow I drove this very pretty lady all the way across
town.

JENNIFER: He didn't charge me a penny.

FRANK: And we got to talkin'.

JENNIFER: He was very sweet.

FRANK: She was really nice.

JENNIFER: Anyhow, we were talking so much that we drove right by
the Met.

FRANK: Right by!

JENNIFER: But I didn't mind. We talked for twelve more blocks.

FRANK: Twelve more blocks.

JENNIFER: And I said...

FRANK: *(As JENNIFER.)* "Why don't we get a bite to eat?" So I
phoned the boys and told them I was out for poker that night and
that I had...

JENNIFER AND MARITZA: A date!

MARITZA: I was so excited.

ABBOTT: I'm an actor. Shakespearean trained. R.S.C. Old Globe. I
had only been in New York for three days when I got a call. They
wanted me. They wanted me to work at the largest theatre in New
York.

JENNIFER: And there he was...

ABBOTT: Working on Broadway!

MARITZA: As an usher.

ABBOTT: As an usher.

JENNIFER: As an usher.

ABBOTT: It keeps me humble.

MARITZA: I was living with my cousin in her clothing shop. We were supposed to go to the theatre that night. The show was called "Mother Brave."

ABBOTT: Mother Courage.

MARITZA: Yes, that was it. Well, at the last minute, my cousin, she had to meet her husband in Jersey. So I went to the theatre by myself.

ABBOTT: I was working the door and this amazing woman walks in. I couldn't stop looking at her. She was simply...

MARITZA: Gorgeous? Beautiful?

ABBOTT: (*Very English.*) Exquisite.

FRANK: (*Very New York.*) Exquisite? Huh!

MARITZA: He was flattering.

ABBOTT: Anyhow, after the show we got to talking and I found out that she didn't understand Brecht too much...

MARITZA: And so Abbott explained it to me after the show.

ABBOTT: And we hung around for a while talking...

MARITZA: He was very smart. He talked to me about Bret...

ABBOTT AND JENNIFER: (*Correcting her.*) Brecht.

MARITZA: We were talking about Brecht when it started to rain. So we quickly found this cute little restaurant.

THEODORE: My restaurant.

ABBOTT: Where we found a nice little table in the corner.

KYRA: About the same time, I was running down the street. By now, it was pouring. There was lightning and thunder and... Oh, I remember, make-up was running down my face.

THEODORE: She looked like a monkey.

KYRA: (*Gets up to reenact the scene; laughing.*) More like a raccoon. Anyway, to get out from under the rain, I found the first place I could and ran inside...

THEODORE: The tile inside my restaurant was very slippery...

KYRA: And I stopped in...

THEODORE: Actually, she tripped in.

KYRA: That's right. Next thing I knew, my hands flew up in the air and the rest of me came down...

SHE falls into THEODORE's arms.

THEODORE: Right into my arms.

KYRA: And when I looked up, there was this man. He had the kindest face and his eyes were sparkling. *(To THEODORE.)* At first, I was startled. *(In Russian.)* Spaseba. *(To audience.)* That means "thank you."

THEODORE: *(To KYRA.)* You're welcome. *(To audience.)* She was the most beautiful thing I had ever seen.

KYRA: I looked horrible. Make-up was running down my face. I looked like a baboon.

ABBOTT: I think you mean a raccoon.

THEODORE: It didn't matter. I helped her over to a table.

KYRA: He gave me some tea. And then he said in the most romantic way...

THEODORE: My spanakopita is burning! *(Exits.)*

KYRA: And with that, he ran back into the kitchen.

JENNIFER: And so, the scene was set.

ABBOTT: We were all met...

MARITZA: The six of us.

KYRA: In that little restaurant.

THEODORE: *(Enters with a coat.)* My restaurant.

ALL: Aesop's Tables!

JENNIFER: Once inside, we pulled up a couple of chairs.

FRANK: It had a lot of pretty flowers everywhere.

ABBOTT: The place was very keen.

MARITZA: Lots of charm.

THEODORE: And over in the corner, shivering like a firefly was this angel.

KYRA: Did you say angel?

THEODORE: Yes. *(In Russian.)* Prevert. Coc diyla?

KYRA: His Russian was terrible, but his heart was big.

THEODORE puts a coat over her.

KYRA: I am much better now, thank you. *(To audience.)* And then we looked into each other's eyes for what seemed like an eternity. He told me in the most romantic way that I smelled sweeter than...

THEODORE: Melomakarona!

KYRA: What is melo-macarena?

THEODORE: It's burning! *(exits.)*

KYRA: And with that, he ran back into the kitchen. As I sat shivering, across the way I could see two couples.

ABBOTT, JENNIFER, FRANK AND MARITZA: That was us.

JENNIFER: So Frank and I...

MARITZA: So Abbott and I...

ABBOTT, JENNIFER, FRANK AND MARITZA: We started talking.

MARITZA: At first it was okay...

ABBOTT: We got along all right...

FRANK: And then it was just...

JENNIFER: Suffocating...

ABBOTT: A little droll...

FRANK: We just didn't seem to...

FRANK, JENNIFER, MARITZA AND ABBOTT: Click.

ABBOTT: What seemed so promising just a few hours ago began to...

MARITZA: Wear thin a little bit...

ABBOTT: And to be honest...

JENNIFER: I really wanted to leave.

MARITZA: But...

KYRA: It started to hail.

ALL: So we stuck it out.

FRANK: Anyhow's, there I was with this chick who was originally from Utah.

JENNIFER: *(Smiling.)* Ohio.

FRANK: Sure. And she says...

JENNIFER: *(To FRANK.)* I need to use the powder room. *(To audience.)* So I get up and leave.

FRANK: I says "powder room, what in the world is that?"

ABBOTT: *(To FRANK.)* The loo.

FRANK: The what?

ABBOTT: The...restroom.

FRANK: Oh, she had to go to the john.

ABBOTT: Right.

MARITZA: (*Laughing at FRANK.*) The john! You are so funny.

FRANK: (*To MARITZA.*) Hey, looks aren't everything.

MARITZA: (*Laughing some more.*) You know what, you are the funniest New Yorker I know.

FRANK: How many do you know?

MARITZA: One. You!

FRANK: This chick at the table next to me had a great laugh. And she was really cute.

MARITZA: He had such a personality.

THEY both laugh.

MARITZA: We had a good laugh.

ABBOTT: I felt like a third wheel.

FRANK: I thought she was a peach. I was already on a date and on top of that she was with this guy...

ABBOTT: Abbott.

FRANK: And Costello.

MARITZA and FRANK laugh.

ABBOTT: Yes. I've never heard that one before.

FRANK: Sorry, buddy. He seemed like a good fella, I'll tell ya!

ABBOTT: I can see where this was going. I didn't mind, she was a nice girl, we just met, and we got along well as friends. I was just about to wiggle away when...

JENNIFER: I returned from the restroom. And I saw the most amazing guy sitting at the table next to us. Our eyes locked.

ABBOTT: And my jaw dropped.

JENNIFER: He had the cutest little accent.

ABBOTT: She smelled like French perfume.

JENNIFER: He looked like Hugh Grant.

ABBOTT: She carried an air of sophistication.

JENNIFER: He had good teeth.

ABBOTT: I had good teeth. And for an Englishman...

ABBOTT AND JENNIFER: That's really something.

JENNIFER: I was a little bold. (To ABBOTT.) Mind if we join you?

ABBOTT: Well...

MARITZA: Fantastic!

JENNIFER: Great.

THEY move their chairs together.

JENNIFER: I'm Jennifer.

MARITZA: Maritza.

FRANK: I'm Frank McCormick.

ABBOTT: Abbott Russet Clarington.

JENNIFER: Is that all hyphenated?

ABBOTT: (Chuckling a little.) Touche.

JENNIFER: Abbott. What a nice name.

ABBOTT: Thank you.

JENNIFER: So...what do you do, Abbott?

ABBOTT: Actually, I'm an actor.

JENNIFER: So you're an artist?

ABBOTT: Absolutely.

JENNIFER: Oh boy, here we go.

ABBOTT: Oh, come off it.

JENNIFER: I'm just joking!

The table laughs, including ABBOTT.

FRANK: So lo and behold, the four of us were having a really good time!

ABBOTT: It was quite nice. Jennifer was quite intelligent.

JENNIFER: And Abbott was quite charming.

FRANK: Maritza was a doll. And I was the funniest thing on two legs.

MARITZA: (Laughing.) He was. He kept me laughing. He still does.

ABBOTT: We were having such a good time.

JENNIFER: Laughing and...

MARITZA: Smiling. I noticed a lonely girl sitting all by herself in the corner.

KYRA waves.

MARITZA: And I said...

KYRA: And she said...

MARITZA: Why don't you join us?

KYRA: So...I did. (*Moves her chair.*) It was very nice of them to invite me. And soon, I was laughing and forgot about how cold it was outside.

ABBOTT: Soon, after a couple of pints, the five of us were having a good time. And we were really, really...

FRANK: LOUD! YEAH! That's how we do it in New York. We ain't yelling. It's just how we talk!

KYRA: We do the same thing in Russia!

ABBOTT: And Texas! YEEEEEEEEEE HAAAAAAA!AW!

ALL: (*Except THEODORE.*) YEEEEEEEEEE HAAAAAAA!AW!

THEODORE: (*Enters and rushes over.*) What do you think you are doing?! You are scarring away all of my customers!

JENNIFER: (*To the audience.*) The place was empty.

KYRA: Theo was really mad.

JENNIFER: But Frank calmed him down.

FRANK: (*To THEODORE.*) You know, with your forehead bulging out of your skull and that thick furry neck of yours, you look a lot like Anthony Quinn.

THEODORE: (*To FRANK.*) Jimmy the Greek?

FRANK: That's it.

With a very stern face, THEODORE exits.

FRANK: Was it something I said?

JENNIFER: We were all a little frightened.

MARITZA: We weren't sure what he was going to do.

KYRA: That's when Theo came back.

THEODORE reenters with a plate of loukoumades.

ABBOTT: We all froze for a moment. Not sure what the owner of this little Greek restaurant was going to do.

MARITZA: Until...

KYRA: A smile broke out across his face.

THEODORE smiles as does FRANK. THEY shake hands.

THEODORE: Jimmy the Greek. I get that a lot! Tell me, do you like loukoumades?

JENNIFER: What's loukoumades?

THEODORE: Sweet little treats from my homeland of Greece. Let me show you. *(Pulls up a chair and starts to dish out the loukoumades.)*

ABBOTT: And there it was. Soon, the six of us became the best of friends.

JENNIFER: All of us from different parts of the country.

ABBOTT: Different parts of the world.

KYRA: Theo and myself married one year later.

MARITZA: Frank and I were married one month later.

JENNIFER: And Abbott and I are engaged to be married.

FRANK: And every Wednesday, we all come to a little place called...

THEODORE: Aesop's Tables.

JENNIFER: To relax.

MARITZA: To get crazy!

ABBOTT: To have a spot of fun.

JENNIFER: And so, that's how we all met.

THEODORE: You never know what life's going to throw at you.

JENNIFER: Any minute your life can change.

MARITZA: Especially in the big apple.

FRANK: In the city they call...

ALL: NEW YORK!

THE END